

THE EPOCH TIMES SPECIAL REPORT

EPOCH INSIGHT



WAR ON FOOD



SPECIAL REPORT

FOOD CRISIS II

How government policies are crippling farmers and the food chain

The War on Food

THIS YEAR, FARMERS IN THE NETHERLANDS—one of the world's largest food exporters—were rocked by proposed environmental regulations that would force the closure of an estimated 40 percent of all farms.

Meanwhile, in Sri Lanka, policies that banned the use of synthetic fertilizer caused food shortages as production yields lagged, leading to protests and the eventual overthrow of the government.

These are just two examples of government policies affecting farmers and their ability to produce the massive amounts of food needed to feed the world.

The United States, meanwhile, is starting to see similar policies creep in.

In this special report—a second installment—we look at the reasons behind the War on Food and how you can better be prepared for food shortages.

We feature interviews with farmers around the world on the challenges they face, as well as experts about the reasons behind the policies.

There also has been a renewed push toward alternative sources of food, namely bugs. Are they really a viable alternative?

The War on Food is one that might end up affecting large numbers of people around the world. As production shrinks and costs rise, those in the poorest parts of the planet are likely to be hit especially hard.

JASPER FAKKERT
Editor-in-chief




ON THE COVER

The war on food is real. Read in this special edition what's behind it and how you can prepare for it.

SHUTTERSTOCK, ILLUSTRATION BY THE EPOCH TIMES

EPOCH INSIGHT

JASPER FAKKERT
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

CHANNALY PHILIPP
LIFE & TRADITION, TRAVEL EDITOR

CHRISY TRUDEAU
MIND & BODY EDITOR

CRYSTAL SHI
HOME, FOOD EDITOR

SHARON KILARSKI
ARTS & CULTURE EDITOR

BILL LINDSEY
LUXURY EDITOR

FEI MENG
ILLUSTRATOR

SHANSHAN HU
PRODUCTION

CONTACT US
THE EPOCH TIMES ASSOCIATION INC.
229 W. 28TH ST., FL. 7
NEW YORK, NY 10001

SUBSCRIPTIONS
READEPOCHINSIGHT.COM

GENERAL INQUIRIES, LETTERS TO THE EDITOR
HELP.THEEPOCHTIMES.COM

ADVERTISING
ADVERTISENOW@EPOCHTIMES.COM

(USPS21-800) IS PUBLISHED WEEKLY BY THE EPOCH MEDIA GROUP, 9550 FLAIR DR. SUITE 411, EL MONTE, CA 91731-2922. PERIODICAL POSTAGE PAID AT EL MONTE, CA, AND ADDITIONAL MAILING OFFICES. **POSTMASTER:** SEND ADDRESS CHANGES TO THE EPOCH TIMES, 229 W. 28TH STREET, FLOOR 5, NEW YORK, NY 10001.

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Coordinated global policies targeting agriculture push famine closer.



The storage warehouse at Nutrien's Cory potash mine near Saskatoon, Canada, on Aug. 12, 2019. | Reuters/Nayan Sthankiya

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A flock of lambs on a fifth-generation farm in Kaipara Hills in Auckland, New Zealand, on June 14. Owner Steve Dill has registered the 510-hectacre farm, which plants up to 2,000 trees per year, as part of New Zealand's Emissions Trading Scheme.

PHOTO BY FIONA GOODALL/GETTY IMAGES

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DON MASON/GETTY IMAGES

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A farmer with his cattle in Des Moines, Iowa, on Aug. 20, 2021. "Cattle producers and farmers and ranchers ... are being targeted because they're easy to remove," R-CALF USA CEO Bill Bullard says.

PHOTO BY SCOTT OLSON/GETTY IMAGES

FAMINE FEARS

WAR ON FARMERS INTENSIFIES

Coordinated global policies targeting agricultural producers pushes famine closer *News Analysis* BY ALEX NEWMAN

THE EFFECTS OF WHAT CRITICS have described as a global “war” on farmers and ranchers are becoming more apparent. But even as food shortages intensify, governments, including the Biden administration, are cracking down harder on agricultural production.

Experts and lawmakers who spoke to The Epoch Times warned that it’s time to rein in government policies that are harming the poor the most. A Republican congressman said a Republican-led Congress would begin work immediately upon taking control.

While the attacks on agriculture and related industries look different in different nations, many experts say it’s a coordinated global policy being promoted by the U.N., the World Economic Forum (WEF), the European Union, and other international forces determined to transform civilization.

In July, The Epoch Times published an in-depth investigative piece citing multiple professionals in the field who said U.N.-backed policies on climate change and sustainable development, which they described as a “war on farmers,” were directly responsible for the escalating food crisis.

The result of the policies targeting agricultural



Empty shelves in a supermarket, due to delays in truck deliveries during protests by farmers and truckers against government policies, in the Netherlands on July 5.

producers is starting to become clear, with food shortages becoming more acute around the world. Think Sri Lanka, but on a global scale—at least if current trends continue.

U.N. leaders and Western officials are discussing it openly. President Joe Biden, for example, citing the conflict in Ukraine, warned earlier this year that “real” food shortages were coming soon.

U.N. World Food Program Executive Director David Beasley has been warning since the start of the COVID-19 crisis of “devastating” global food shortages that could lead to a famine of “biblical proportions” in dozens of nations.

“The world must open its eyes to this unprecedented global food crisis and act now to stop it spinning out of control,” he said last month at a World Food Day event hosted by a U.N. agency led by a member of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP).

In fact, with farmers and ranchers under growing regulatory pressure, numerous authoritative sources are warning that even wealthy countries such as the United States could start seeing supply-chain issues in food and other critical sectors in the months ahead.

Suffering in Europe

In Europe, the cracks in the system are starting to show. Already, an increasing number of items are missing from supermarket shelves as prices skyrocket. In the UK and Germany, escalating shortages at stores have made headlines for weeks.

Numerous nations around the world—especially in the Middle East and Africa—are already facing major food crises. And with U.N.-backed “sustainable” policies by governments and the financial industry decimating energy systems and agricultural production, the pain is likely to increase, experts say.

It’s especially hard on the poor, according to Dr. E. Calvin Beisner, president of the Cornwall Alliance for the Stewardship of Creation and a leading Christian authority on environmental issues.

He blasted anti-farming policies supposedly aimed at fighting climate change.

“Banning or reducing the use of nitrous fertilizers in the name of fighting global warming is nonsense,” Beisner told The Epoch Times, pointing to policies pursued by governments around the world in response to U.N. advocacy.

“Nitrous oxides are a bit player in the overall greenhouse effect, overshadowed hundreds of times by carbon dioxide and thousands by water vapor.

“The infrared wavelengths at which nitrous oxides absorb are almost completely absorbed already. Hence, they can contribute only an insignificant amount to global warming.



FROM SPECIAL TO THE EPOCH TIMES: JENS SCHUEFER/AFR/VIAGRETTI IMAGES

“But their contribution to human well-being is immense, as they multiply crop yields per acre, per hour of labor, and per input of capital, making food more abundant and less expensive for everyone. The poor benefit more from them than anyone.

“The war on farmers is a war on the poor.”

War on Farmers

The war on farmers has been observed clearly in Holland, Sri Lanka, South Africa, Canada, and many other nations—even in the United States.

In public, pretexts for the policies include saving the planet from alleged man-made climate change, dealing with various other environmental issues, improving economic efficiency, and even giving lands to “indigenous” people.

But critics say the true motivation seems to be much darker.

The ultimate goal of powerful international actors, according to the international organizations, such as WEF, behind many of the policies resulting in food insecurity, is to restructure every element of life on Earth.

From rethinking private property rights to drawing up a “new social contract,” everything must be transformed, WEF founder Klaus Schwab and his organization have argued for years while promoting what they refer to as the “Great Reset.”

But not everybody is on board.

The Ranchers-Cattlemen Action Legal Fund United Stockgrowers of America, known as R-CALF USA for short, represents cattlemen and ranchers across the nation. The group ♦

A tractor with an agricultural implement attached drives across a parched field near Beelitz, Germany, on Aug. 18.

is sounding the alarm about the dangers of the U.N. and WEF agenda.

“What’s happening is the globalists have an agenda that can best be effected by targeting the low-hanging fruit,” R-CALF USA CEO Bill Bullard told The Epoch Times, saying that the trend was obvious when the Dutch government declared war on that nation’s farmers.

“What they’re doing is targeting the segment of the agriculture industry least capable of absorbing these additional regulatory costs. When governments impose these policies, those that can withstand these added costs are the large agribusinesses, not the little guys.”

Bullard said that “this is an attempt to eliminate independent farmers and ranchers around the world” and that governments and international organizations were working together in the effort.

“Cattle producers and farmers and ranchers are the front line; they are being targeted because they’re easy to remove,” he said.

Pointing to numerous Biden administration policies targeting farmers, Bullard said that if this isn’t stopped, “we will see farmers and ranchers dropping like flies.”

The end goal is to “further the consolidation and centralization of food production by transnational global elitists—international tribunals, the World Economic Forum, and all the rest of them.”

“All this originates with the U.N. sustainable agenda, Agenda 2030, Agenda 21, and multinational corporations all involved in influencing and working with the U.N.,” he said.

The president of R-CALF USA, Brett Kenzie, also chimed in, saying that “global elites” were pushing “sustainability,” which he described as “the latest denomination of false idol worship that should put the fear of God into us all.”

“All they want is everything, and your ability to generate a living with your private property will be their first victim,” Kenzie said.

UN-Backed Policies

Indeed, as The Epoch Times reported in a recent article headlined “UN, World Economic Forum Behind Global ‘War on Farmers’: Experts,” a number of U.N. Agenda 2030 “Sustainable Development Goals” are directly linked to the global war on farmers.

The goals, which were developed with help from the CCP and have been adopted by governments worldwide, call for drastic changes in agriculture, production, and even consumption. They have been regularly cited by governments in developing the very policies that many knowledgeable parties blame for the food crisis.

The WEF signed an official “strategic partner-



ship” with the U.N. designed to bring major businesses around the world into the movement to impose Agenda 2030 goals on the planet.

The text of the deal promises to “deepen institutional engagement and jointly accelerate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.”

U.N.-backed government policies targeting the energy sector are also playing a major role in the developing food shortages, experts said.

For instance, Europe’s efforts to phase out reliable power sources including hydrocarbon energy and nuclear power have produced devastating effects on European industry.

Especially hard hit has been fertilizer production, a critical agricultural input. Due to soaring fertilizer prices, food production has been compromised as food prices surge higher worldwide.

In the United States, the Biden administration, the bureaucracies, and Congress have also been targeting agriculture and energy.

The Inflation Reduction Act, for instance, will see taxpayers pay farmers to not farm, under

The U.N. headquarters in New York on Oct. 12. Multiple experts have said U.N.-backed policies on climate change and sustainable development were directly responsible for the escalating food crisis.

the guise of implementing “climate-friendly” agricultural crop rotation.

The Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) has also angered farmers nationwide with a proposed regulation that would force them to track emissions if they do business with a publicly traded company.

It’s not just government. Major banks and investment managers around the world have also signed on to U.N. policies contributing to the food crisis.

In fact, a coalition of 19 attorneys general from mostly Republican states is investigating possible collusion between the six largest U.S. banks and the U.N.’s “Net-Zero Banking Alliance.”

As participants in the U.N. program, the banks agree to pursue “net-zero” emissions by 2050 by ending, or radically scaling back, investment and lending to traditional energy producers and agricultural interests.

Multiple state attorneys general involved in the investigation told The Epoch Times that this “collusion” by U.S. banks with the U.N. was un-

dermining American agriculture and industry while benefiting the CCP.

“Our own money is being weaponized against us,” West Virginia Treasurer Riley Moore told The Epoch Times in August, as he moved against the mega banks for targeting key industries.

Congress Getting Involved

U.S. lawmakers have also become increasingly concerned about the targeting of agricultural producers with government policy and pressure from financial-service providers.

U.S. Rep. John Rose (R-Tenn.) owns and operates a farm that has been in his family for more than 230 years. He also served as agriculture commissioner in Tennessee before being elected to Congress in 2012.

Concerned about regulatory overreach impacting farmers and the “very real threat of food shortages,” Rose organized fellow congressmen to make their voices heard.

In the first letter to the SEC chief, Rose and more than 115 members of Congress called for the agency to reject the “significant and unworkable regulatory burden” being proposed for the agricultural community.

In the second letter, Rose and almost all Republicans on the House Committee on Financial Services pointed to the recent Supreme Court ruling against the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) establishing emissions caps on power generation as evidence that the SEC lacked the authority to move forward.

In an interview with The Epoch Times, Rose said that when Republicans retake the House, they intend to unleash “aggressive” oversight and rein in the regulatory abuses targeting agriculture and other sectors.

“I don’t think these policies are necessary or appropriate,” he said, noting that there was a nexus with the U.N. agenda and that the pressure being put on farmers was “very worrisome.”

“We see the Biden administration using regulatory muscle to effectuate this green agenda through overreach.”

In addition to the SEC’s proposal on emissions reporting that will crush small farms, Rose pointed to Biden administration efforts to expand federal control of water resources by broadening the definition of “Waters of the United States.”

“The EPA has been taking very aggressive steps with respect to necessary crop protection tools farmers use, even suspending access after farmers have purchased supplies,” Rose said. “That’s not helpful.”

“I’ve dealt directly with farmers who are being harassed using regulatory overreach that previous ‘Waters of the United States’ policies ❖



“We can’t implement policies that will lead to shortages of something as important as food.”

Rep. John Rose

FROM L: ED JONES/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES; NTU

World Economic Forum founder and Executive Chairman Klaus Schwab speaks with Chinese leader Xi Jinping remotely at the WEF's headquarters in Cologny, Switzerland, on Jan. 17. The goals of the international forces were developed with help from the CCP and have been adopted by governments worldwide.



during the Obama years had given to federal agencies. It's really having a deterrent effect on agricultural production."

The end result of these types of policies against farmers, he said, will be "continuing shortages and deterred production around the world."

It's all "self-inflicted," too, the congressman noted.

"We have to take stock of the fact that we can't implement policies that will lead to shortages of something as important as food," he said, calling that "obvious" and noting that farmers must continue feeding the world.

"This is all a formula for famine around the world."

The same is true in the energy sector, Rose said, pointing to policies deterring the exploration and development of resources.

"It doesn't make sense to have our head in the sand on these issues," he said.

"Everybody's concerned about the environment, but this religious zeal where they've turned green concerns into a mantra to live by is a big mistake."

But if Republicans take control of both houses of Congress in January, "we will see a decidedly focused effort to conduct appropriate oversight of

the Biden administration and various regulators, including in financial services," according to Rose.

"We will have strident, forceful oversight," he said, noting that transparency and reining in abuses would be a key focus and that legislation and leverage with funding could be possible tools to stop the administration from "intentionally harming" the U.S. economy and agriculture in particular.

"You will see aggressive moves on all those fronts. Ultimately, tremendous pressure will be brought to bear."

Foreign allies should be "encouraged" to not make the same sort of policy "mistakes" Biden is making, which lead to food and energy shortages, according to Rose.

"The productive capacity to feed the world is there—in fact it's growing every year. We have proven we can feed the world," he said. "But in order to do that, we have to move forward, and we can't tie a hand behind our back, which is what Biden and many of the international folks interested in green initiatives are trying to do."

"Maybe that's what they want. One of the most common questions I get from voters is, 'What's the hidden agenda?'"

"People understand that if you don't produce

oil and don't have a substitute, what happens? You get brownouts, blackouts like California; requests to not charge your car. That's not practical. The economic ripples that creates lead to things like shortages, including in food. We can't have that."

Responses from Biden, UN

As the food shortages become more acute, Western political figures including Biden have already offered some strong hints about how they'll respond.

For instance, in the face of soaring energy prices that experts say were caused by his policies, Biden—sounding more like a Venezuelan strongman than a U.S. president—repeatedly blamed companies for "profiteering."

In response to fertilizer shortages, U.S. Agency for International Development Administrator Samantha Power celebrated what she called a "silver lining."

"Fertilizer shortages are real now," she said on ABC News. "As a result, we're working with countries to think about natural solutions like manure and compost, and this may hasten transitions that would have been in the interest of farmers to make eventually."

Sri Lankan farmers tried that in response to a U.N.-backed ban on fertilizers by the socialist government there, and it ended in disaster.

Ironically, the U.N., which has long been supporting climate and sustainable development policies that experts blame for the food-supply issues around the world, is now presenting itself as the answer to the crisis.

"The international community has a good sense of how to tackle the food crisis; what we need now is coordinated government action," said Michael Fakhri, the U.N. "special rapporteur on the right to food," in a statement portraying the U.N. and governments as the solution to the problem that experts say they caused.

Fakhri also called on governments to "set the right conditions for a transition to agroecology."

U.N. Secretary-General António Guterres, a former leader of the Socialist International, has also sounded the alarm about what he described as the "global food crisis."

Speaking at an event last month that was hosted by U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization chief Qu Dongyu—a member of the CCP and former official for the regime in Beijing—Guterres said 3 billion people today can't afford a healthy diet.

"The number of people affected by hunger has more than doubled in the past three years," he said, noting that "almost a million people are living in famine conditions, with starvation and death a daily reality."

"Governments, scientists, the private sector, and civil society need to work together to make nutritious diets available and affordable for all."

The U.N. and the organization's relevant agencies didn't respond to requests for comment by press time. ■

President Joe Biden speaks to guests gathered at the O'Connor Grain Farms in Kankakee, Ill., on May 11. The Biden administration and Congress have been targeting agriculture and energy in the United States.



FROM TOP: FABRICE COFFRINI/AP VIA GETTY IMAGES; SCOTT OLSON/GETTY IMAGES

NETHERLANDS

THE STRUGGLE ISN'T OVER FOR DUTCH FARMERS

Every cow is registered with government in plan
to cut nitrogen by 90 percent

BY NATHAN WORCESTER

DURING THE SUMMER OF 2022, protests erupted in the Netherlands over the government's plan to curtail nitrogen emissions from the country's farms—in some cases, by up to 95 percent.

At the time, authorities acknowledged that their proposal would necessitate slashing livestock numbers across the country, especially near areas protected as part of the European Union's Natura 2000 network. The stated rationale was to limit emissions of ammonia and nitrogenous oxides, which are thought to be changing the composition of plant life in such zones.

The Dutch government expects that a substantial number of farms will have to close, as detailed in a report from the U.S. Department of Agriculture. In October, farming groups voiced displeasure with the latest plan issued by the government's mediator, politician Johan Remkes. Some on the farmers' side pledged to continue protesting.

In September, The Epoch Times' Roman Balmakov visited the Netherlands and spoke with a variety of farmers on the ground for an upcoming documentary, "Eat the Bugs." They described the challenges their sector faces from the national government and the EU, as those and other powerful factions seek to change how the world produces and consumes food.

Not Every Farmer Can Go Organic: Dutch Organic Farmers

Jan-Hein and Sandra Nikkels are organic farmers. They don't use pesticides or fertilizer, and they try to employ a limited amount of manure.

Their operation includes thousands of egg-laying hens, as well as 200 milking cows. The animals they raise have more space than they would on many nonorganic farms. They can also go outside.

"It's not so easy to farm [organic], but we like it," Jan-Hein told Balmakov in a Sept. 28 interview with the couple. ♦

A tractor on the property of Dutch organic farmers Jan-Hein and Sandra Nikkels on Sept. 28. "Not any farmer can [farm organic]," Sandra says.

PHOTO BY THE EPOCH TIMES





Sandra said, “You have to work more with the weather.”

In 2020, the EU’s Farm to Fork strategy set ambitious organic farming targets for 2030—a 50 percent reduction in pesticide use and 25 percent of farms becoming organic.

Jan-Hein and Sandra voiced skepticism about that sort of promotion of organic farming on a much larger scale.

“Not [every] farmer can do that. Not everybody has enough land around their farm to send the chickens out or the cows out,” Sandra said.

She believes that it’s more important for consumers to try to buy eggs produced locally, even if they aren’t organic. Organic food has to be one of many options, at least for now, she said.

“A consumer has to decide, ‘We want to buy organic,’ and then the market is ready, and then you can make the transition. But when I am in the supermarket, I want to choose,” Sandra said. “Organic is what we feel is good, but not everyone can pay for it.”

Jan-Hein pointed out that organic farming isn’t always ideal from an environmental perspective.

Even as organic farmers, they haven’t been spared the potential fate of making huge cuts to their livestock numbers. According to Sandra, almost half of

(Above) Dutch organic farmers Jan-Hein and Sandra Nikkels on Sept. 28.

(Right) The Nikkelses say they’ve already reduced their chicken numbers by 90 percent over the past two decades.



their stock will be in the government’s cross-hairs.

“No one knows” how the policy will be implemented, she said, speculating that authorities might hope many farmers make the changes by ceasing operations altogether.

“It’s all top down, and there’s nothing bottom up,” Sandra said.

The nitrogen-related cuts wouldn’t be their operation’s first sacrifice. Jan-Hein and Sandra pointed out that they’ve already reduced their chicken numbers by 90 percent over the past two decades.

The two don’t believe that the government’s nitrogen policy is motivated by a concern for nature. Like many others in the country, they believe that the state

is seeking to acquire land to build more housing and related infrastructure.

“[Farmers] take care of the environment and the landscape. By taking that away, you can build houses and highways, but that’s not good for nature, I think,” Sandra said.

As with many Dutch farms, the land has been in the Hein family for generations. Jan’s grandfather began working the land back in 1906.

The two farmers agreed that the pressure on their sector is discouraging the next generation.

“Young farmers are quitting,” Jan-Hein said.

It may prove hard to come back from those losses, even for newcomers who



(Left) Dutch dairy farmer Robbin Voorend on Sept. 30.

(Bottom) Voorend represents the sixth generation of farmers in his family.



hope to continue the country’s proud tradition of efficient, innovative agriculture.

“When you don’t have a farm in your family, it’s almost impossible to start one,” Sandra said.

The two farmers said they hope the government will give farmers a chance to come up with a solution, one that isn’t simply dictated from on high.

Problems With Government at ‘All Times’: Dutch Dairy Farmer

As far as he knows, Robbin Voorend represents the sixth generation of farmers in his family. In 2017, he took over his parents’ operation.

Today, there are 58 cows on his farm. Over the course of a year, they yield more than 130,000 gallons of milk.

95%

THE DUTCH GOVERNMENT’S latest nitrogen emissions plan would force farmer Robbin Voorend to cut his livestock numbers by 90 to 95 percent.

“I usually milk twice a day, because we still milk in a traditional milking pit,” he told Balmakov in a Sept. 30 interview.

Voorend said that although he has problems with the government at “all times,” his current issues began in early 2017. That March, the government told

him he had to get rid of 12 cows.

“Every cow is registered in the system—so they know how [many] cows I have,” he said.

The government’s concern arose out of its plan to reduce phosphate—a vi-

sion the U.S. Department of Agriculture described as an effort to set “limits to Dutch dairy production.” Voorend had exceeded a government target that was determined on the basis of numbers from a previous year.

That system soon became more and more onerous, he said. At one point, he was forced to buy phosphate rights from another farmer.

“I spent a ton of money to keep the same cows I had back then,” Voorend said.

The government’s latest nitrogen emissions plan would force him to cut his livestock numbers by 90 to 95 percent.

Voorend said the government has shown little interest in technological solutions to nitrogen emissions tied to agriculture.

“EVERY COW IS REGISTERED IN THE SYSTEM—SO THEY KNOW HOW [MANY] COWS I HAVE.”

Robbin Voorend, Dutch dairy farmer

He said he feels discouraged from investing further in his operation, including in any emissions rights he might be able to purchase. Banks are also averse to the risks associated with agriculture as a result of the new, still-evolving nitrogen policy, he noted.

“I understand that too. That’s not weird,” Voorend said.

He doesn’t know what he would do if the government forced him to reduce his herd to six cows. His farm, like many others, might have to close.

Against the drumbeat of agricultural “progress,” defined by many elite institutions in terms of radical cuts to animal farming, Voorend remains unpersuaded. The elimination of productive farmland to preserve nature could ultimately backfire, he said.

“The population worldwide is only growing. So you’re going to need [food].”

You’ll be able to hear other interviews with farmers in the Netherlands and across the world in The Epoch Times’ upcoming documentary, “Eat the Bugs.” ■

ALL PHOTOS BY THE EPOCH TIMES

*The fields at the “State of Jefferson”
near the border between California
and Oregon, on Sept. 18.*

PHOTO BY THE EPOCH TIMES

STATE OF JEFFERSON

CALIFORNIA RANCHERS HAMSTRUNG BY BUREAUCRACY

Government policies add challenges beyond water, wildfires, and wolves

BY NATHAN WORCESTER

F YOU LOOK CAREFULLY, YOU'LL SPOT IT all over the place in rural Siskiyou County, California—on flags, on banners, and even on bumper stickers.

Two “X”s in a yellow circle symbolize what supporters see as the double-crossing governments of Oregon and California. Words encircle the double crosses: “The Great Seal of State of Jefferson.”

The movement to carve out a separate state is just one visible sign of the conflict between city and country on the fringes of the Pacific Northwest.

In a series of Sept. 18 interviews with The Epoch Times, local ranchers explained their problems with the latest stringent restrictions on their use of water.

On the California side of the state line, limits have been enabled by Gov. Gavin Newsom’s emergency drought measures.

Water has always been an issue out west, particularly in California; last century’s water wars were famously dramatized in the 1974 movie “Chinatown.”

Yet when seen from another perspective, the current struggles between ranchers and state agencies look like skirmishes in a different war—this one over the future of food.

“What better way to control the masses than by co-opting, stealing, claiming authority over all water?”

Deborah Bacigalupi, rancher

Even as many of California’s farmers and ranchers feel the heat from Sacramento, Newsom, a former World Economic Forum Young Global Leader and frequent speaker, has quietly taken steps to further the replacement of animal protein with substitutes, considered by some to be more eco-friendly.

The state’s latest budget allocated \$5 million for research and development on “plant-based and cultivated meats,” the first such funding from California’s state government.

Ranchers aren’t the only ones feeling the squeeze. Rep. Doug LaMalfa (R-Calif.), a fourth-generation rice farmer in the state’s Central Valley, told The Epoch Times that drought-related restrictions on water forced him to take much of his acreage out of production.

Meanwhile, the state, long known for its dominance in milk production, is rapidly losing dairies.

California nonprofit Dairy Cares reports that the number of dairies in the state has now fallen from 1,900 in 2008 to roughly 1,100. Milk out-



“We’re portrayed in most of the media as a bunch of rubes that are tearing the ground up because their forefathers did it for the last 100 years,” Lane Roelle, a rancher on the Oregon side of the line, told The Epoch Times.

The Bacigalupis of Siskiyou County make no secret of their support for the State of Jefferson. A banner hanging from a roadside barn on their land invites people to join.

Jerry Bagicalupi grew up on a ranch that’s a few hours from his home today. When he bought his current property, he and his family were living in Sacramento. Jerry’s daughter, Deborah Bacigalupi, was just 13 at the time.

“We’re portrayed in most of the media as a bunch of rubes that are tearing the ground up because their forefathers did it for the last 100 years.”

Lane Roelle, Oregon rancher



put declined slightly too, to 39 million from 41 million gallons of milk per year.

National statistics from the U.S. Department of Agriculture show that the country’s total cattle and calf numbers decreased by 2.4 percent in 2022 from the previous year, continuing a long-term downward trend.

In the eyes of many farmers and ranchers, a challenging environment has only been worsened by hostile treatment from the occupational press.

(Top) Oregon rancher Lane Roelle doesn’t think that Americans are prepared for what a food shortage might look like.

(Above) Deborah Bacigalupi says that the biggest threats to local ranchers are three big “Ws”: “Water, wolves, and wildfires.”

In the arid Little Shasta Valley, the Bacigalupis enjoy a green and pleasant land that sustains birds, frogs, mammals, and other fauna. That shows that human intervention and biodiversity need not work at cross-purposes, Deborah said. After all, many of the water features were created or altered by her father.

“You build a pond, and all of a sudden, you have an oasis,” she told The Epoch Times.

Water is one big reason for the Bacigalupis’ uneasy relationship with the state, and, in particular, the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB)—just one arm of the state’s labyrinthine environmental bureaucracy.

The family comes to the fight armed with expertise. Jerry spent years working as a water engineer for the California Department of Water Resources.

Deborah described the board’s power as near-dictatorial during the drought.

In response to this characterization, an SWRCB spokesperson told The Epoch Times in a Nov. 7 email that it “holds public meetings that offer the public [an opportunity] to participate in the board’s development and implementation of drought and other water-related policy and regulatory actions.”

In a follow-up interview that same day, Deborah scoffed at the idea that public comments meaningfully influence the board.

“I think they just go through public comment to check off a box,” she told The Epoch Times.

The Bacigalupis have recently tangled with the SWRCB over its request that the family line a

ditch on their property.

Jerry thinks the state’s intention makes no sense from an environmental point of view. Lining the ditch would eliminate a valuable hotspot for natural life, he argued.

“Think of the vegetation along there. Think of the wildlife habitat,” he said.

Deborah believes that the struggle over water is just one small part of a much bigger picture.

“I know that China and California are constantly looked at as the model for globalism,” she said on Sept. 18, citing her governor’s connections to organizations such as the World Economic Forum.

“What better way to control the masses than by co-opting, stealing, and claiming authority over all water?” she asked.

Even as they spar with the state over property rights, the Bacigalupis must contend with a very real, very severe drought.

“I’ve never seen it this dry,” Jerry said.

He had to rescue one of their cows after it got stuck in a pond, in a vain search for more water.

“I pulled her out and left her there for two days, and she died. She never made it,” Jerry said.

According to Deborah, the biggest threats to local ranchers are three big “Ws”: “Water, wolves, and wildfires.”

The region’s growing wildfire problem is no great secret to anyone who follows the news. While some commentators pin much of the blame on man-made climate change, others argue that decades of forest mismanagement are the sole or primary culprit.

The return of gray wolves to northern California, on the other hand, is less likely to make the headlines.

Environmental groups have championed the reappearance of wolves, bears, and other large predators in places from which they once were expelled.

Indeed, in many cases, humans have deliberately reintroduced those species to their former ranges. (While some people have different theories, the state’s Department of Fish and Wildlife says it didn’t shepherd gray wolves back into California.)

The restoration of such species is central to the broader vision of “re-wilding” large swaths of the planet, an aspiration mirrored by the Biden administration’s “30 by 30” plan to protect 30 percent of the country’s lands and waters by 2030.

Newsom issued his own California-specific 30 by 30 plan through a 2020 executive order.

Here in the heart of Jefferson, the wilderness ideal looks rather different on the ground.

Ranchers whose ancestors drove off grizzly bears and other large predators now fear attacks on their cattle from the resurgent gray wolves. It’s once again defined as endangered under the Endangered Species Act (ESA), thanks



to a court order that overturned the Trump administration's delisting.

Deborah questioned the priority of environmental activists who claim that animal welfare or well-being are among their foremost concerns. "They don't care if a gray wolf is chewing up alive, eating bit by bit our cows," she said.

The image, although horrifying, corresponds to a reality that's hundreds or thousands of miles away from the many people deciding the future of places such as Siskiyou County. To some, it might as well not exist.

Theodora Johnson's forebears arrived in Siskiyou County's Scott Valley during the 1860s, as the California Gold Rush drew prospectors to the area.

"They started farming to feed the miners," Johnson told The Epoch Times.

She and her husband are raising three little kids. Those children mark her family's seventh generation in the Scott Valley.

Like the other ranchers who spoke with The Epoch Times, Johnson and her husband are chafing against the restrictions on water use.

Under the current drought emergency regulation, cattle get only 15 gallons of water per

day unless the temperature soars above 90 degrees Fahrenheit.

"It's not enough, especially for a lactating cow," said Johnson, a member of the Scott Valley Agriculture Water Alliance.

In practice, local ranchers are allegedly defying the regulation. One SWRCB cease and desist order that's aimed at farmer Lance Batistich accuses him of violating water right curtailments under the drought emergency based on "photographic evidence received from California Department of Fish and Wildlife staff."

"The diverter expressed their disagreement with the curtailment orders with hostility and voiced skepticism about the state and federal agencies," the order states.

Batistich didn't respond to a request by The Epoch Times for comment by press time. The SWRCB declined to comment on the order.

"No one is going to limit how much their livestock can drink, because that's inhumane," Johnson said.

Whatever form the rules take, hostility to ranchers' ways of life doesn't seem far below the surface to locals.

"I think they want us to just get rid of the cows,"

Cows at Frank Konym Dairy Inc., in Escondido, Calif., on April 16, 2020. The number of California dairies fell to roughly 1,100 from 1,900 in 2008, a report says.

FROM LARAMADE/REXUSER/AP/WIA GETTY IMAGES; THE EPOCH TIMES



(Top) California rancher and engineer Jerry Bacigalupi thinks the state's intention makes no sense from an environmental point of view. **(Above)** Theodora Johnson, the sixth generation of her family in the Scott Valley, and her husband are chafing against the restrictions on water use.

Johnson said.

Oregon rancher Roelle and his wife are dealing with many of the same problems as their peers in California.

"That's why I agreed to be on the board for [the Klamath] irrigation district," he told The Epoch Times. "It's not that I'm the guy to take care of it, but maybe every little bit helps."

Roelle is used to economic upheavals in the region. After all, he used to be a logger.

The lumber industry's contraction in the State of Jefferson resulted in part from the 1990 listing of the northern spotted owl as threatened under the ESA.

"Millions of acres of highly productive federal timberland in the Pacific Northwest and northern California were set aside," University of Chicago researcher Eyal Frank wrote in a 2021 paper analyzing the economic impact of that move.

That fracas over the spotted owl finds an eerie echo in ranchers' current disputes with the government. Much of the disagreement, including over the fate of several local dams, ultimately comes down to habitat for protected fish species.

The Roelles supplement their ranching income through other activities—not an uncommon story for all but the largest producers today.

For example, Scott Valley's Johnson is a freelance writer, and her husband works in construction.

In Lane's case, that something extra comes from his work as an X-ray technician.

Like Johnson and many others in the Klamath Basin, Roelle has deep roots in the area. His mother's family came to Oregon along an overland route in 1847, shortly before the Oregon Territory came into existence, he said.

Now, however, he almost wishes he had sold out a decade ago.

He's surviving with the help of \$450 per acre of drought relief.

"It doesn't make you whole. It keeps you going

"I think they want us to just get rid of the cows."

Theodora Johnson, rancher

another year, and you hope that your next year is better," Roelle said. "And that's all it is. It's like, well, here's enough to prolong your misery."

Even so, he finds it hard to imagine parting from the land he loves.

"We've made it our home. I don't know why we should have to leave," Roelle said.

He doesn't think that Americans are prepared for what a food shortage might look like, should rising input prices, supply chain disruptions, or other factors converge to drive widespread hunger in the country.

Years of ever-improving yields per acre have left the country accustomed to abundance. Obesity is far more common than undernourishment.

He reflected on the possibilities. The country and world would no doubt change if food went from merely costly to absent.

As the interview drew to a close, Roelle spotted something moving on a nearby hill.

"Is that a mountain lion?" he asked, before quickly correcting himself. "No, it's a coyote."

He alerted one of the Bacigalupis: "You've got a coyote up there in the cows."

"I would shoot it—but that's just me," he quietly noted.

In the State of Jefferson, certain basic realities—the water flow along a ditch, alfalfa yields per acre, a predator stalking the cattle—loom larger than they do in Sacramento, Washington, or Davos.

Time will tell who sees the world more clearly. Neither the federal Bureau of Reclamation nor Newsom's office responded to requests for comment on this story by press time.

The Klamath Basin ranchers' story will be part of an upcoming documentary from The Epoch Times, "Eat the Bugs." ■

WATER MANAGEMENT

In California, Water Is Power

‘When they keep cutting the water, they’re cutting the food,’ says farmer-congressman

By Nathan Worcester

ON THE ROAD FROM YUBA City to Chico in the northern half of California’s heavily agricultural Central Valley, it’s hard to stop thinking about water—especially during election season.

Political signs advertise candidates’ positions on the issue, an indication of its virtually unmatched importance to the people and communities between the Sierra Nevadas and the California Coast Ranges. One poster along the road in late September read, in order, “Water, Jobs, Liberty.”

Rep. Doug LaMalfa (R-Calif.), the man behind the poster, understands the politics of water.

A member of the House’s Committee on Agriculture and the ranking Republican member of its Conservation and Forestry Subcommittee, he’s also a fourth-generation rice farmer.

“This land has been in our family since 1931,” LaMalfa told The Epoch Times’s Roman Balmakov during a Sept. 17 interview on his farm in rural Oroville. His children are the family’s fifth-generation farmers.

LaMalfa is currently farming roughly 1,800 acres, less than usual because of cutbacks to his water allocation. Water levels in the lakes that supply his farm have been low.

There’s a drought, he acknowledged. Yet he disputes the claim that it’s the worst drought in 1,200 years. While the early months of 2022 were extremely dry, October and December 2021 were marked by heavy precipitation—including record-breaking snowfall in the Sierras during late 2021.

Shasta Lake and Lake Oroville, two nearby lakes that are recharged in part by snowmelt, are both higher now than they were at this time in 2021.

LaMalfa thinks the state is playing up the drought so that the governor can use emergency powers to cut water to senior water-rights holders—those who are last in line to lose their water



Rep. Doug LaMalfa (R-Calif.) on his property in California’s Central Valley on Sept. 17.

18%

SOME SENIOR WATER-RIGHTS

holders in the Sacramento River system have received just 18 percent of their typical water supply.

in the event of cuts.

For example, some senior water-rights holders in the Sacramento River system have received just 18 percent of their typical water supply.

“Like you see with COVID, emergency powers go a long way toward making people do things they normally wouldn’t do or scaring them into doing it,” he said.

LaMalfa has an old water claim that allowed him to cultivate most of the rice he intended to this year. Yet he was able to show Balmakov a dry field on his property, left unplanted because some water to which he would normally be entitled was made unavailable.

“There’s that much less rice planted now that’s going to be on the market for people’s consumption,” he said.

“When they keep cutting the water, they’re cutting the food.”

That’s a particularly challenging problem this year. The Russia–Ukraine war has disrupted global food and fertilizer markets. Multiple countries, including India and Hungary, have placed restrictions

on the export of grain or similar commodities.

LaMalfa pointed out that a large percentage of many American crops come from California. That includes the vast majority of the country’s tomatoes, artichokes, olives, avocados, grapes, and many others.

In his view, the current pressure on California’s farmers can be attributed to “layer on layer of environmental activism, and government being taken over by that type of activism.”

An influential environmental nongovernmental organization (NGO), the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC), is under fire from Republicans for its ties to the Chinese regime. The NRDC asserts that California’s water rights today are “built on a violent and racist foundation.”

LaMalfa argued that good, well-intentioned environmental laws such as the Clean Air Act and the Clean Water Act have been abused.

Yet the conflict between environmental groups and farmers runs deeper than competing interpretations of federal statutes or water allocations during a particularly dry year.

The water levels are low at Shasta Lake in Redding, Calif., on July 2, 2021.



The Biden administration supports a 30x30 plan to protect 30 percent of American lands and waters by 2030—an effort almost guaranteed to bring existing landowners into conflict with the federal government and environmental NGOs.

LaMalfa argued that the Biden administration’s vision is downstream of U.N. Agenda 21 and related plans. Many rural landowners see those efforts as geared toward urbanization on the one hand and rewilding on the other, leaving little room for farmers, ranchers, and what remains of America’s small towns.

“There’s a lot of things coming down the pike that are trying to change people’s natural behavior into what government wants and basically corralling us into small, tight spaces so we can be more easily controlled and taxed and made to stand in line and do what government wants,” he said.

“They’ve got kids scared to death [of] global warming and CO₂.”

In and beyond the United States, the triumph of environmental activism in the halls of power has had dramatic real-world consequences.

Sri Lanka’s ban on conventional chemical fertilizer ultimately triggered food shortages and civil unrest. The country’s prime minister and president both resigned.

LaMalfa didn’t rule out the possibility of something similar happening in the United States.

“Even right now, I wonder what it’s going to be like with all the crops that weren’t planted this year in this country or the other areas of this country where the crops are struggling,” he said.

He believes that environmental, social, and governance criteria and similar systems for imposing environmentalism on business and the state could have very grim results.

“There’ll be a whole lot of people who can’t get food under that kind of thinking,” LaMalfa said. ■

FROM TOP: THE EPOCH TIMES; JUSTIN SULLIVAN/GETTY IMAGES

NEW YORK

TRADITIONAL FARMING BUCKS COMMUNISM

Christian farmer seeks to glorify God through care of land, family

BY NATHAN WORCESTER

Sheep on traditionalist Catholic farmer Michael Thomas's property in upstate New York.

PHOTO COURTESY OF MICHAEL THOMAS

IT'S LATE OCTOBER in Sharon, New York. The hills are painted red, orange, and yellow. Mist hangs in the earth-scented air, far below the migrating birds.

"The retreat of bugs and peepers creates a pensive silence this time of year," traditionalist farmer and cider maker Michael Thomas said in an Oct. 27 text message, one in a series of interviews with *The Epoch Times*.

On Twitter, Thomas is "Michael Thomas of Sharon": "Father of five. Traditional Catholic."

Through his account, he has spurred a new, old response to the dislocating power of modernity—the Catholic Land Movement, the revival of a nearly century-old effort to promote homesteading among faithful Catholics. (He owns the website CatholicLandMovement.info.)

One recent tweet, illustrated by images of trees shrouded in fog, conveys something of his message:

"Restoration of order & common sense is never so far away. A disordered structure will not stand. Modernity attempts to defy both natural order & its perfection by Grace. A constant panic to deny conclusions so readily available. Human will is no substitute for perennial Truth."

'By Their Fruits You Shall Know Them'

Anyone reading Thomas's Twitter posts can see he's no fan of the forces arrayed against small farmers like himself.

But who, or what, are those forces?

Thomas believes Matthew 7:16—"by their fruits you shall know them"—could offer an answer.

The "fruits" of the World Economic Forum (WEF), for example, include lab-grown tissue or other "alternative proteins" intended to replace conventional meat.

Thomas thinks the current push for fake meat is grounded in a fundamentally optimistic view of technology—one he does not share.

"We're becoming technological right down to our bodies," he said.

That, anyway, appears to be the vision of WEF and its allies. One 2019 document from that organization trumpets the imminent arrival of "affordable biohacking."

Thomas also worries about the influence of big agribusiness firms. Those compa-

nies, he said, could stand to gain from the hyper-technological future forecast by the WEF and other globalist groups, especially if that future favors a small number of well-connected private players.

To the titans of agribusiness, a world of a few massive buyers, effectively compelled to purchase their products, might look like paradise.

Like other homesteaders, Thomas came to farming in hopes of avoiding that particular dystopia. Among other things, he wanted to avoid running up the large debts that are common among bigger farmers.

"My idea was to grow slowly," he said.

Thomas still has a full-time day job—not too unusual in the often precarious world of small-scale farming and ranching, and a sign, perhaps, of the limits to scaling his approach in a growing, hungry world.

Today, he grazes 15 sheep in a traditional apple orchard. He ferments his apple varietal of choice—an English bittersweet—in oak barrels.

His cider-making hearkens back to America's deep past. Many of the Founding Fathers loved hard cider.

His practices align with what many environmentalists want to see on a much larger scale. For instance, he doesn't irrigate his land, and he doesn't spray his trees with fungicidal copper or sulfur.

On the other hand, Thomas's reliance on sheep and other animals places him at loggerheads with the many powerful forces trying to curtail or even eliminate animal agriculture, on the stated grounds that it's not environmentally sustainable.

One such actor is the Dutch government, which has sought to slash livestock numbers in the Netherlands.

Thomas voiced his solidarity with the Dutch farmers who protested that proposal, describing the government's efforts as "just bizarre."

Journey to Logos

Thomas's opposition to the people and groups seeking world-spanning power didn't start yesterday.

As a young man during the early 2000s, he associated with the left-leaning anti-globalization movement. Back then, he was an anarchist.

"I mean, we were all kids once," Thomas said.

He became disillusioned with that ❖



Michael Thomas, a traditionalist Catholic farmer in Sharon, N.Y.

scene during the mid- to late-2000s, as woke politics first began to make headway in it.

In the mid-2010s, Thomas began to rediscover the Catholic faith in which he was raised.

Today, the former anarchist sees himself as a reactionary Catholic traditionalist.

“For me, homesteading and local agriculture are innately reactionary responses to the failure of modernity and global liberalism,” he said.

Thomas’s return to tradition, like that of many others, comes at a strange moment, one of ideological ferment on the periphery of American politics as usual.

Our understanding of who, or what, is left wing or right wing is rapidly changing. Fifteen years ago, who would have expected Democrats to celebrate the Cheney family or Republicans to embrace Tulsi Gabbard?

Thomas draws on a wide range of influences, including traditionalist farmer and poet Wendell Berry and Orthodox Christian environmentalist Paul Kingsnorth. Yet there are clear limits to what he tolerates. For one thing, he firmly rejects liberalism and communism.

“I think that liberalism is a dialogue with evil. And I think that communism is evil that uses that foothold to gain

“I think that liberalism is a dialogue with evil. And I think that communism is evil that uses that foothold to gain social acceptance.”

Michael Thomas, traditionalist farmer

social acceptance,” Thomas said.

He believes the world is inevitably moving in a post-liberal direction. According to him, the specific path that post-liberalism follows could prove critical to the future of humankind.

“If it doesn’t manifest in the correct way, you can get these terrible convulsions of humanity,” he said.

A few potential futures glimmer just over the horizon.

One fate, Thomas believes, could involve the rise of Chinese Communist Party-style social credit scores in the service of authoritarian state control, aided and abetted by globalist capital.

“It’s obviously something the global corporate elite are pushing toward, and so it needs to be refuted,” he said.

From a Christian perspective, such attempts to establish omniscience and omnipotence in this world can look like a poor imitation of Logos—that is, the creative reason and Word of God, manifest in Jesus Christ.

“Is it the anti-Logos? It’s an echo of the original sins of pride and arrogance,” Thomas said.

“Man crowns himself master of all things and, in this arrogance, condemns himself to slavery of the State.”

Catholic Land Movement Rooted in Past

Thomas wanted an alternative to the futures on offer from the Chinese regime, the WEF, and the like.

To move forward, he looked back. He found his way to the Catholic Land Movement, a response to rapid industrialization around the turn of the 20th century with new appeal in modern times.

Thomas thinks the pressures on people back then were similar to those today—in the modern case, from groups like the United Nations through its 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Then as now, it seemed as though

people were being herded into cities.

The original Catholic Land Movement gave people a framework to reject those pressures and seek a different path.

Its roots draw on Pope Leo XIII’s 1891 encyclical *Rerum novarum*, which rejected hostility between labor and capital.

“Private ownership,” Leo XIII wrote, “is in accordance with the law of nature.”

Fr. Vincent McNabb is another source of inspiration. Thomas’s website reproduces McNabb’s article “The Catholic Land Movement.”

“On the land,” McNabb wrote, “the father of a family, which is the divine unit of human society, can seek liberty without himself falling into any anti-social selfishness.”

Catholic writers G.K. Chesterton and Hilaire Belloc also influenced the movement.

“For all of these thinkers, especially Chesterton and Belloc, it was important that men and women should have the dignity that comes from possessing property,” Dermot Quinn, a professor at Seton Hall University and editor of the *Chesterton Review*, told *The Epoch Times* in an email. “Property enables, indeed requires, self-reliance. It allows families to flourish together. It forms a protective barrier against the over mighty state.”

Thomas said, “At the core of the Catholic faith is the family—and at the core of the homesteading movement is the family.”

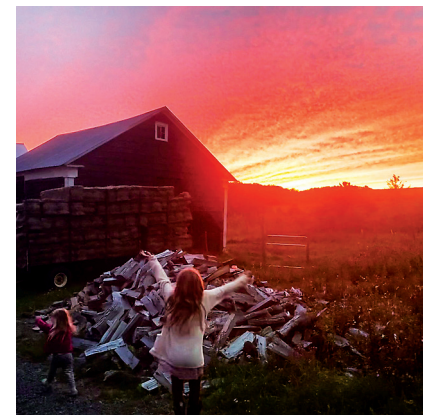
There is, of course, a raw, biological dimension to the success or failure of a belief system. A religion that commands its followers to be fruitful and multiply, whether Christian or otherwise, can be expected to win out over one that tolerates or even exalts barrenness. The former will produce offspring; the latter won’t.

Thomas doesn’t think that analysis conflicts with traditional Catholicism or the Catholic Land Movement.

Large families, he said, are beautiful—“and beauty will save the world.”

An inaugural conference for the revived movement, held this August on Thomas’s property, drew many faithful Catholics.

The movement, Thomas said, is still in “primordial emergence”—fitting language for the young, extremely online traditionalists who flock to Thomas and figures like him.



Traditionalist Catholic farmer Michael Thomas’s property in Sharon, N.Y. Thomas wanted an alternative to the futures on offer from the Chinese regime, the World Economic Forum, and the like. For someone living with modern technology and burdened by social pressures, it can be hard to imagine owning and cultivating a little piece of the country.

Against such an idealized virtual backdrop, complete with well-lit photographs of apple trees, sheep, and the upstate New York sky, it’s tempting to accuse many of those would-be homesteaders of live action role-playing—in other words, LARP-ing. The LARP, it follows, is somehow inauthentic or unserious.

For someone renting an apartment in some alienating, hive-like city, tethered to modern technology and burdened by social pressures large and small, it can be hard to imagine owning and cultivating a little piece of the country.

Thomas doesn’t fault young people for starting small on their journey back to the land. “They have to crawl from the wreckage of modernity,” he said.

His own slow growth toward greater independence wasn’t always worthy of a picturesque social media post.

“I tilled my own soul and tilled the land with my failures,” he said.

Quinn, of Seton Hall University, said the newest version of the Catholic Land Movement has many supporters.

“It represents a striking response to the spiritual poverty of our time, when, in the midst of material plenty, we find our deepest desires unmet by crude commerce and mere consumerism,” he said.

In a season of transition, an upstate cider maker hopes to tend something that lasts. His success could strengthen many other pilgrims from the system. ■



The World Economic Forum annual meeting is held in Davos, Switzerland, on May 24.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: COURTESY OF MICHAEL THOMAS; FABRICE COFFRINI/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

FOOD STORAGE

Food Storage Smarts

How to protect and prolong your family's long-term supply

By Lisa Bedford

HAVING AN EMERGENCY food supply is no longer unusual. More families across the country are filling cupboards, closets, and under-the-bed spaces with canned food, buckets of wheat, and more, literally grocery shopping for the future.

Building food storage pantry customized to your family's tastes and needs is worth the effort. To get started, keep track of your family's favorite meals and the simplest recipes you use. List what you're eating now, as that will provide a guide for what your longer-term storage should include.

Before buying anything in bulk, especially if it's something new to your household, buy a small amount and give it a test drive. Use it in a recipe or two, then try incorporating it into more meals. Stock up only when you know for sure that it suits your family.

With this investment of time and money, it's essential to know how to protect stored food so that when a crisis hits, it's unspoiled, tasty, and nutritious. A strategy to help to ensure this is to know the six enemies of food storage: heat, light, oxygen, pests, humidity, and time.

Handle the Heat

Heat, by far, has the most significant negative effect on food. Food retains its optimal level of nutrients, flavor, and texture when

To protect your long-term pantry, it's helpful to know the six enemies of food storage: heat, light, oxygen, pests, humidity, and time.

stored at very cool temperatures, such as in a cold basement. But for practical purposes in your home, aim to store your non-perishables at a steady 70 to 75 degrees F. Though that's not always possible, simply storing food in the coolest location in your home can mitigate the effects.

Never store food in an uninsulated attic, garage, or outbuilding. Besides fluctuating and possibly extreme temperatures, food will attract pests of all kinds. A determined rodent can chew through a five-gallon plastic bucket surprisingly fast.

Repackage Foods for the Longest Shelf Life

Fortunately, the proper containers can mitigate the next four enemies: light, oxygen, pests, and humidity. In most food storage pantries, you'll find cans, glass jars, food-safe plastic buckets, and Mylar bags. Each provides an excellent storage environment to help food to retain its flavor, texture, color, and nutrients, and to avoid rancidity.

Most store-bought foods are packaged for immediate consumption and not long-term storage. For example, consider the food in your kitchen right now—you'll likely see paper bags, cardboard containers, and thin, plastic packaging. If you plan to use this food within three or four months, it will probably be fine simply stored in a cool, dark, and dry location. But if you plan to build a long-term supply, consider first repackaging it inside better containers.

Food-safe buckets in different sizes are a good choice for dry foods such as cornmeal, beans, wheat, rice, and oats. Depending on your family size and ability to heft a bucket that might weigh 20 to 30 pounds, choose the size of bucket that suits you best. Too many preppers load up on dozens of five-gallon buckets only to find how difficult they are to lift and maneuver, especially as they get older. Still, these buckets are handy and inexpensive. A Mylar bag that fits inside the bucket



The lids and rims of glass canning jars help to protect the contents from one of the top enemies of food storage: oxygen.

er openings, setting traps, or sprinkling diatomaceous earth around the baseboards are all effective methods for keeping insects and rodents out of your food.

Is Old Food Safe to Eat?

Time is a factor to consider as you increase your food storage pantry from a 30-day supply to one of many months. Sooner or later, you'll look at a can of food with a stamp that says, "Best if used by ..." and realize that date has long since passed. However, if stored in optimal conditions, the food will likely still be edible and nutritious, if not its original quality, even after its "expiration" date.

Over time, food can lose its nutritional value, color, flavor, and texture. If the food is obviously discolored or deteriorated, or if it smells rancid, toss it out.

A simple way to avoid this is to rotate your stored food by occasionally using the oldest items in your everyday cooking and replacing them with newer items. Use a black marker to circle the "best by" date on each can or container so it's easy to identify the foods that you should next rotate out. Keep a pad of paper or clipboard handy to list the foods you've used so you can continue to maintain and build your emergency food stash.

And remember that your food storage pantry is more than just a stash of food. It's a tangible way you're preparing to care for your loved ones in a crisis. In our uncertain world, that investment is worth protecting. ■

as a liner is even better than the classic bucket alone. This bag provides another layer of protection for your food. Look for bags with a thickness of 15 millimeters; the easiest way to purchase them is online. The beauty of Mylar is that it can be cut to fit any size of container or used on its own as a food storage bag. Use a flat iron or clothes iron to seal both ends of the bag, and you'll have a near-perfect food storage container.

Glass canning jars also make excellent containers. The lids and rims help to protect the contents from oxygen, and the smaller sizes are handy for everything from nuts to chocolate chips and dried fruit.

One kitchen appliance that's worth the investment is a vacuum sealer. Not only can this handy machine seal food inside heavy-duty plastic bags, but with a jar sealer attachment, it can also vacuum the

air out of canning jars, protecting food from oxidation.

Add the correct size of oxygen absorber as you repackage your food, and you'll eliminate oxygen as one enemy of stored food. Follow these general guidelines: 100 cubic centimeters of oxygen absorber for a 32-ounce canning jar; 300 cc for a one-gallon container; and 1,500 cc for a five-gallon bucket or container.

Unfortunately, insects are sometimes found within food packaging. This happens when microscopic insect eggs are present when the food is packaged. They're impossible to detect and remove, but when storing dry foods such as flour, potato flakes, or rice, you can kill insect eggs by storing them in airtight containers and placing them in a freezer for a week, or by adding an oxygen absorber to the package. Cold temperatures and a lack of oxygen will kill the eggs.

Improve Your Food Storage Area

Finally, assess where your food is stored. A cool, dark, and dry area is best; you can mitigate the effects of heat, light, humidity, and pests by improving storage conditions.

A dehumidifier or portable air conditioner can create more optimal conditions in a hot and/or humid environment. If you live in a humid climate, a moisture absorber, such as DampRid, does a great job of removing excess moisture in the air; too much humidity will result in rusty cans and possible mold and bacterial growth.

Inexpensive window film, curtains, or window shades will cut down the light entering a room, reducing its damaging effects on foods stored inside transparent or opaque containers.

Sealing cracks in the walls and oth-

A dehumidifier can create more optimal conditions for storing food in a hot or humid environment.



A vacuum sealer can seal food inside heavy-duty plastic bags and also vacuum the air out of canning jars.



Food-safe buckets in different sizes are a good choice for dry foods such as cornmeal, beans, wheat, rice, and oats.



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: ISTETIANA/GETTY IMAGES; ELENA SCHWEITZER/SHUTTERSTOCK; MERCEDES FITTIPALDI/SHUTTERSTOCK; MARIA BOIKO/SHUTTERSTOCK



The body requires protein for building and maintaining muscle mass, cellular repair and generation, and satiety.

FOOD SUPPLY

Bulking Up the Pantry

How to add protein to your emergency food storage plan

By Lisa Bedford

A FOOD STORAGE PANTRY stocked with rice and canned vegetables is still incomplete if it doesn't contain enough protein to maintain your health and the health of your loved ones. Unfortunately, it's possible to become malnourished on the typical food storage checklist found on many survival and prepper websites if it doesn't contain enough essential nutrients.

The body requires protein for building and maintaining muscle mass, cellular repair and generation, and satiety (the sensation of feeling full). In addition, protein contains the essential amino acids that the human body cannot produce on its own; is necessary for healthy hair, skin, nails, bones, and ligaments; and even aids in hormonal regulation.

A sedentary 60-year-old woman needs about 55 grams of protein per day. On the other hand, a physically active young man needs nearly 80 grams of protein daily. Online tools like the USDA's DRI calculator can help you estimate how much protein you require per day, and assess your supply of protein-rich foods.

While rice, beans, and canned vege-

tables are easy to store, protein sources such as meat and fish take a little more planning and money. But in a crisis, when your mind and body are under stress, having these foods in your emergency supply may help to keep you healthy, strong, and capable of leading your loved ones through it.

Buying Fresh Meat

When we think of protein sources, fresh meat is at the top of the list, whether it's beef, pork, poultry, or fish. Hunting, fishing, and raising animals for food can help a great deal, but even in a time of rising prices, you can still find bargains on fresh meat at the grocery store by comparing the weekly food ads.

Local farmers and ranchers often sell directly to consumers, which is one of the best ways to quickly stock up on a lot of fresh meat. Find a meat source by searching online with the name of your town and "fresh beef near me" or "fresh chicken." LocalHarvest.org is one site where you can search for nearby meat sources.

One of the many advantages of buying directly from a reputable farmer or rancher is that you will know how their

animals are fed, treated, and butchered. In addition, you'll be provided with a "cut sheet" showing the different cuts of meat available and the price per pound. Whether you buy a "whole cow," "half a cow," or a selection of cuts, between steaks, brisket, ribs, stew meat, and roasts of all kinds, you'll likely end up with cuts you've never tried.

The initial investment may range from \$1,500 to more than \$3,000 for beef. Once you recover from the sticker shock, remember that this meat may last for several months or more. You can lower the price by purchasing it with friends or family members, but be sure to designate the cuts of meat you want and how many of each, so each person receives exactly what they pay for.

Learn How to Pressure Can

The next step will be to load up your freezer. If there's a power outage, however, this pricey investment will quickly spoil. A generator can keep a freezer going as long as you have a fuel source, but there are also other ways to preserve meat so that it's shelf-stable and safe at room temperature.

One way is to home can it. Once you learn how to can food, you'll wonder why you hadn't done it before. Beef, freshly caught salmon, meatballs, sausage, and chicken parts can all be home canned in glass jars. It's a joy to open a jar of canned cooked chicken breasts, ready for enchiladas, a casserole, or a quick stir-fry. It's meal prep made super easy.

Since meats are a low-acid food, they must be canned using a pressure canner. The pressure canner can heat food to minimum temperatures of 240 to 250 degrees Fahrenheit to destroy the most dangerous food poisoning bacteria that cause botulism. A pressure canner is a one-time investment, well worth the expense. Two reliable pressure canner brands are Presto and All American. Depending on the brand and size, you can expect to pay between \$150 and \$400. A pressure canner differs from a pressure cooker such as an Instant Pot, which shouldn't ever be used for canning food.

"The Complete Guide to Pressure Canning" by Diane Devereaux is an excellent resource book complete with instructions and recipes. The three-lesson video course from SimplyCanning, "Pressure Canning Confidence," also provides instructions that are simple to follow.

Make Your Own Jerky

Another way to preserve meat is by making your own beef jerky using a food dehydrator. Jerky is an easy and handy way to have high-protein food ready for snacking or camping, or to include in an emergency kit.

Jerky can be made from thinly sliced steaks or roasts; the leaner the cut, the better, since fat (marbling) won't fully dehydrate and will eventually become rancid if it isn't refrigerated or frozen. You can also use lean ground meat with seasonings and salt.

Whichever method you choose, be aware that once dehydrated, your dried jerky harvest will be about one-third the weight of the fresh meat used. The shelf life of jerky is about two months at room temperature and up to six months if refrigerated. A vacuum sealer can help to lengthen the time.

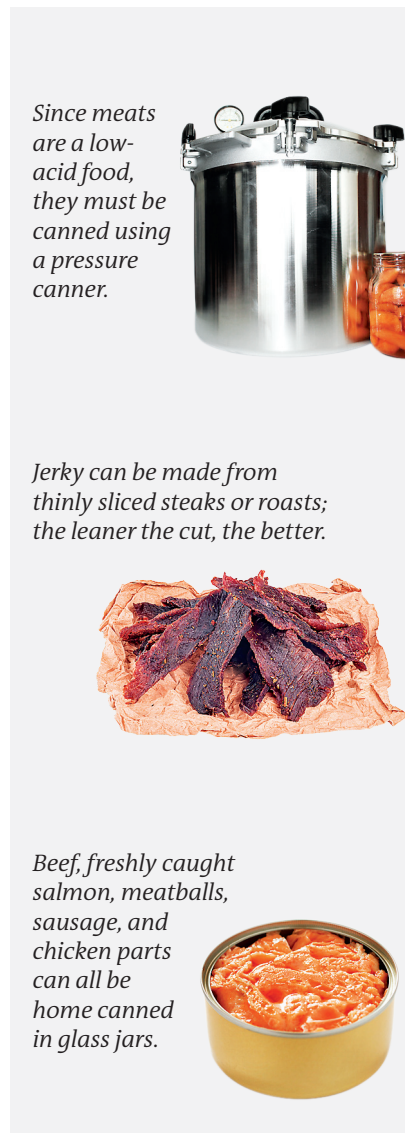
Buying Canned and Freeze-Dried Meats

Stocking up on meats need not be pricey or time-consuming. Simply adding cans of tuna, chicken, roast beef, or even deviled ham to your food storage pantry adds that essential layer of protein. Keep an eye on the "best by" dates on these cans, since, in my experience, canned tuna can become mushy after a year or so.

All kinds of meats can be found in

the realm of freeze-dried food: shrimp, shredded pork, diced beef, seasoned chicken strips, sausage crumbles, and more—all ready to eat once hydrated with a bit of water. These are expensive, but—between watching for discounts and using them sparingly in recipes—they can add a truly shelf-stable and lightweight form of protein to your storage.

High-quality freeze-dried meats from Thrive Life have a shelf life of up to 25 years when stored in a cool location (50 to 75 F), and they have one of the best selections in the market. Mountain House and Honeyville are two other well-known companies that sell freeze-dried meats.



Since meats are a low-acid food, they must be canned using a pressure canner.

Jerky can be made from thinly sliced steaks or roasts; the leaner the cut, the better.

Beef, freshly caught salmon, meatballs, sausage, and chicken parts can all be home canned in glass jars.

Instant and Dried Beans

Also in the freeze-dried category are instant beans, another good protein source. Instant refried beans, black beans, and pinto beans are ready to eat with some quick rehydration, and there's no need to soak them overnight or boil them for long periods. This could be crucial in a dire emergency when you have little time to cook, much less prepare, complicated meals. Compared with canned beans, instant beans have the advantage of being lightweight.

Dry beans with the highest protein levels include kidney beans, lentils, split peas, black beans, and navy beans. Packaged and stored correctly, dried beans and legumes have a shelf life of 20 years or more. Combine either instant or dry beans with your preferred type of rice, some vegetables, and seasonings, and you have the perfect, complete-protein meal.

Additional Sources

One form of plant-based protein you might not be familiar with is textured vegetable protein (TVP). It comes in standard flavors such as "beef" and "chicken," but you'll also find taco-flavored and bacon-flavored TVP. If you've ever eaten Bac-Os, you've eaten TVP. It's made from soy flour, so it won't be everyone's cup of tea, but a small amount added to a soup recipe provides additional protein, and a little goes a long way. Some moms I know have combined inexpensive, rehydrated TVP with ground beef on taco Tuesday night to add to the meat filling for more tacos.

In my own food storage pantry, I've included a few large containers of protein powder, because one scoop can contain 20 to 30 grams of protein—about as much protein as four ounces of a cooked beef roast or a cooked chicken breast. Protein powder can help to fill the gap between more expensive stored meats and the protein necessary for you and your loved ones to remain in optimal health throughout an emergency.

A large container of high-quality protein powder can easily cost \$50 or more, so look for one that contains at least 20 grams of protein per scoop to maximize your purchase. Read the list of ingredients carefully to make sure it doesn't contain anything that might trigger a food allergy or sensitivity, or any artificial flavors or sweeteners that you wish to avoid. ■



AGRICULTURE

FEEDING INSECTS TO LIVESTOCK

Major corporations investing in insects as substitute for soy protein

BY AUTUMN SPREDEMAN

A worker laying out mulberry leaves for silkworms to feed on at a silkworm farm in Miaoli, Taiwan, on Oct. 27, 2021. Silkworms are among the most commonly used bugs in nutritional supplements

PHOTO BY SAM YEH/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

MAKING A MEAL OUT OF bugs is at the top of many people's "yuck" factor—as edible protein supplements made from crawling locusts, buzzing flies, and hopping crickets aren't mainstream in Western cultures.

Nevertheless, some advocates of sustainable farming have found a way around this stigma by using insect protein in livestock feed.

Often marketed as a green alternative for products such as soy, experts estimate the demand for bug protein in animal fodder will reach 500,000 tons by 2030.

Some analysts project the insect farming industry will surpass \$3 billion by 2027. That's a growth rate of 33 percent in the next five years alone.

This is because the demand for protein continues to rise in lockstep with the global population. One analysis suggests that commercial food production will need to ramp up by 70 percent by 2050 to meet increasing food demands.

Insect farmers have moved into the spotlight. Major corporations have already invested in research for using insect meal in animal feed. Some have already begun putting it in pet food.

In 2020, Nestle announced its Purina Beyond Nature's Protein food for pets features insect meal as a key ingredient. The brand is available for dogs and cats and uses a mix of bugs, chicken, and fava beans.

Purina uses black soldier fly larvae, which is a popular protein supplement for animal feed. It also features in European livestock provender.

"You build a facility for black soldier flies or other insects where you can produce them throughout the year, where soy, you only get one crop per year," Jeffery Tomberlin told The Epoch Times.

Tomberlin is an entomologist and director of the Forensic and Investigative Sciences Program at Texas A&M University. He studies the potential of insect protein for both human and livestock consumption.

Providing Direct Benefits

"I think the black soldier fly is an example that provides direct benefits. We can produce more per year at the given ❖



(Above) An estimated 80 percent of soy produced globally is fed to livestock. (Right) Hargol FoodTech creates nutritional supplements from grasshoppers. The company manufactures a supplement from locusts using vertical farming.

location than soy or other row crops. And we can recycle things contaminating the environment as a feedstock for the black soldier fly," he said.

Fast-food giant McDonald's has been experimenting with insect protein as a replacement for soy in chicken feed since 2018.

During the event Feed Protein Vision that year, McDonald's former director of global sustainable sourcing, Nicola Robinson, said, "One of the main reasons we are looking at alternative proteins is because of our commitment to forests."

Other household names stepping into the edible bug arena include Tyson Foods, Mars, and PepsiCo.

Sustainability in livestock farming is a hot topic everywhere. Consequently, companies and investors are jumping on the insect protein bandwagon.

The main objective is to reduce the environmental impact of crops grown

for animal consumption.

This leaves insect protein some pretty big shoes to fill since an estimated 80 percent of soy produced globally is fed to livestock.

Superior to Soy?

"Insects are more sustainable than soy in many aspects, not only carbon emissions. They require less water, less arable land, and less waste. They're also a climate-resilient crop, as it is done indoors year-round," Dror Tamir, CEO of Hargol FoodTech, told The Epoch Times.

Tamir and his fellow insect farmers create nutritional supplements from grasshoppers. The company manufactures a supplement from locusts using vertical farming.

The nutrient-dense powder contains 72 percent complete protein and other essential nutrients, such as omega-3 and omega-6. It also has zinc, folic acid, magnesium, potassium, and vitamins B and E.

"Specifically for Hargol's locusts, it's even more humane than farming soy. Growing soy, farmers have to kill all the animals around them: insects, birds, reptiles, lizards, and mammals. They do it using pesticides and traps that are cruel and also contaminate the environment," Tamir explained.

Tamir says his company's method of bug farming uses no pesticides, fertilizers, hormones, or antibiotics. As an added bonus, no secondary processing is needed to extract protein from grasshoppers, as it is for soy.

"Even the harvest is done in a humane way," he said.

Other than grasshoppers and black soldier flies, silkworms, mealworms, and crickets are among the most commonly used bugs in nutritional supplements.

Insect farms have a small carbon footprint, which is a major selling point for climate change advocates. One analy-



FROM L. JIANNABROMATA/AP VIA GETTY IMAGES; COURTESY OF HARGOL FOODTECH; JOHANNES KROEMER/GETTY IMAGES; ENLIGHTENED01/SHUTTERSTOCK

500,000 TONS

EXPERTS ESTIMATE THE DEMAND for bug protein in animal fodder will reach 500,000 tons by 2030.

\$3 BILLION

SOME ANALYSTS PROJECT the insect farming industry will surpass \$3 billion by 2027.

70 PERCENT

ONE ANALYSIS SUGGESTS commercial food production will need to ramp up 70 percent by 2050 to meet increasing food demands.

sis suggests that insect farming emits 75 percent less carbon and uses half as much water as poultry farms alone.

Despite operational advantages and "green" appeal, Tomberlin says insect protein and soy shouldn't be rivals.

"One thing I would like to point out is that we should think of the industry, not as a competitor for soy, but how these industries can partner together. ... Collectively, we can provide a balanced diet to supply the livestock, poultry, and aquaculture industries."

Industry Challenges

As with all game-changing ideas, there are real-world hurdles to navigate. Several obstacles must be overcome for insect farming to hit its forecasted growth projections.

Among these are cost-effectiveness and regulatory infrastructure.

"The main challenges, as we see it, are costs and safety issues," Tamir said.

also the most cost-effective protein source, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Tamir also says further research on insect protein in regard to safety, digestibility, and health benefits for each animal is needed.

Tomberlin echoed this.

"I think the biggest challenge is this [insect protein] is young. We're trying to determine how to produce it economically," he said.

"If you look at the production of soy or other row crops, they can be produced much less expense-wise than insect-based protein."

Tomberlin concurs with Tamir's thoughts, saying that the industry needs to develop infrastructure allowing for better production while dealing with contamination prevention, quality control, and digestion issues.

Some research has challenged the boasted protein benefits of certain insects.

A study examining the protein content groups of crickets that were fed five different diets revealed that only the ones eating a grain-based diet—similar to that of chickens—produced comparable protein to poultry.

That brings into question the environmental payoff of feeding insects to animals—or eating them directly—if they need a similar diet as livestock to replicate the protein of regular meat.

One of the cricket study authors, Mark Lundy, wrote, "I think the sustainability claims on this topic have been overstated given the current state of knowledge."

But for now, the insect protein business is booming. ■



(Above) An estimated 80 percent of soy produced globally is fed to livestock. (Right) Hargol FoodTech creates nutritional supplements from grasshoppers. The company manufactures a supplement from locusts using vertical farming.



A man prepares to eat a hamburger and fries in a cafe in Glasgow, Scotland, in this file photo.

PHOTO BY JEFF J MITCHELL/GETTY IMAGES

PERSONAL HEALTH

GOOD HEALTH CRUCIAL TO FREEDOM

BY RAW EGG NATIONALIST

Food corporations, Big Pharma, and governments keep people weak, sick, and compliant **Commentary**



ANATION IS ONLY AS HEALTHY as the people—the individuals—it comprises. If we recognize this simple, obvious fact, what are we to say about the health of our nations today? Look around at your fellow men, women, and children. How have we reached this point? And who, ultimately, benefits?

It's an undeniable fact that for the past 100 years, ordinary people throughout the developed world have been getting sicker and sicker. Why? Our diet, which has changed profoundly, is an obvious culprit. The negative effects of the new industrial diet were evident from the start. The great pioneering dentist Weston A. Price charted the emerging effects as part of a globe-trotting adventure that became the seminal book "Nutrition and Physical Degeneration," published in 1939. In an effort to make sense of the deteriorating health of the patients—especially children—at his dental practice in Ohio, Price intuited that what they were eating was to blame. This led him to seek out traditional societies and groups around the world that did not yet follow Western-style industrial diets, in the hope of discovering what humans really should be eating in order to flourish and grow to their full potential.

Price found that, despite the regional variation, traditional peoples who displayed optimal health all built their diets around nutrient-dense animal foods: organ meat, especially liver; fatty cuts of meat; blood products; milk and cheese; eggs; seafood; and fat products like butter and lard. This is precisely the kind of diet we, in the West, were quickly moving away from in Price's day.

Now, such a diet is but a distant memory, a speck in our civilization's rear-view mirror. Today, we build our diet around foods our ancestors would've eaten very little of or wouldn't even have eaten at all. That means, especially, refined carbohydrates and toxic plant-based fats—vegetable and seed oils—that less than a hundred years ago were considered fit only to be used as engine lubricant (really—look it up). And what has happened? We've grown fatter and unhappier, afflicted by rising diabetes, cancer, gut dysfunction, infertility, autoimmune diseases, depression, and other mental health disorders.

At the same time, we suffer from increased exposure to a wide variety of harmful chemicals. These chemicals, which are essential to many of today's most important industrial and agricultural processes—including the manufacture of plastics—wreak havoc on our hormonal systems, drive infertility, and encourage our bodies to put on weight. The recent Tucker Carlson documentary "The End of Men," in which I played a



starring role, has drawn much-needed attention to these substances, which are compounding the effects of widespread poor nutrition. Indeed, according to one reproductive health expert, if current trends in sperm counts continue, we may, as a species, cease to be able to reproduce naturally within the next 30 years. This is an existential problem.

So how has this happened? Food has been recognized as a tool of social control since at least the days of Plato. In the "Republic," written nearly 2,500 years ago, Plato's Socrates states that a bland vegetarian diet would help the workers of his ideal society to keep their tempers in check and accept their humble lot. Throughout the 20th century, social planners, philosophers, and eugenicists advocated modifying the diets of ordinary people, including adding chemicals such as sterilants to the water, to better control them.

The truth is, though, that the weakening and sickening of the general populace has proceeded in a haphazard manner and is as much the product of chance as planning. The triumph of the lipid-heart hypothesis, for instance, which

A woman feeds her family's herd at Murray Hay & Cattle in Lebanon, Ore., on April 13. We need to return to local food systems that prioritize the needs and well-being of individuals, not mega-corporations and the corrupt politicians in their pockets.

FROM TOP: NATHAN HOWARD/GETTY IMAGES; SAEED KHAN/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

justifies abandoning animal fats for vegetable and seed oils, owes perhaps as much to the fact that President Dwight Eisenhower had a heart attack in the Oval Office as it does to faulty science, personal rivalries, and the commercial desire to turn industrial waste products into profitable "healthy" commodities. Industrialization, urbanization, and population growth are also clearly to blame for the massive changes to diet and lifestyle, and were far from planned.

Even so, the beneficiaries are still those we might expect if indeed this had all been a grand plan or conspiracy: the corporations, the medical regime, and the government. The corporations sell us perverted food and poison the environment. The medical regime offers us expensive ad-hoc treatments, instead of addressing the root causes, and deliberately misleads us about the efficacy and side effects of its "medicines." And, of course, there's the government, which governs a docile, dependent population, rather than a mass of healthy, motivated, independent people. This is why a movement for health and fitness cannot be apolitical today. Its targets must be precisely

these organizations and structures that benefit so heavily from keeping us in a state of physical and mental weakness.

Our health and freedom also face a new threat, one that is arguably even greater than any faced before: the Great Reset. Despite the copious window dressing—"we need to make the world a fairer place and also save it from climate change"—the reality of the Great Reset is a brutal consolidation of elite power. Corporations, hand-in-glove with the government, will be given total control over our lives, including the way we eat.

Like the great social transformation of the Neolithic, when man went from hunter-gatherer to sedentary farmer, the Great Reset is also built on a fundamental transformation of food production and consumption. A global plant-based diet, enforced in all likelihood by means of a carbon-credit system, will complete our alienation from the life-giving foods our ancestors thrived upon.

What's more, the production of enough plant food to feed a global population of 10 billion will require a massive intensification of the worst chemical-based farming practices in use today, as well as the near-universal adoption of genetically modified organisms, with the potential for dire unforeseen environmental and health consequences. We can rest assured, though, that our leaders will continue to eat the fine organic foods they are accustomed to today, including those animal products that the rest of us will be denied.

The only way to resist the globalism of the Great Reset is by strengthening individual nations, and that, as I say, means building the strength of their citizens as much as electing the right politicians. We need to return to local food systems that prioritize the needs and well-being of individuals, not mega-corporations and the corrupt politicians in their pockets. This is about so much more than just looking or feeling better: Our very freedom hangs in the balance. ■

Today we build our diet around foods our ancestors would have eaten very little of, or wouldn't even have eaten at all.

People work on the production line at a food processing plant in Saraburi, Thailand, in this file photo. The industrial diet is negatively impacting the health of the world's population.



A farmer feeds free-range organic turkeys on Laverstoke Park Farm, in Overton, England, in this file photo.

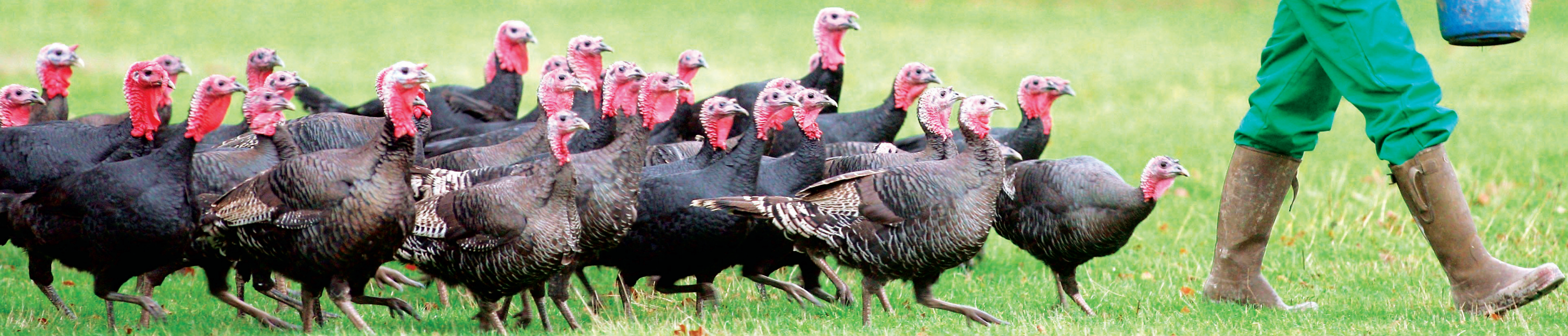
PHOTO BY MATT GARDY/GETTY IMAGES

AGRICULTURE

Can Organic Farming **FEED THE WORLD?**

Commentary By Kelly Walker

The truth about nitrogen, from the ground up



SYNTHETIC, or “chemical,” nitrogen fertilizers are bad for the environment, but “organic” fertilizers are good. ... Right? Well, not exactly. Oversimplified thinking like this has more to do with environmental ideology than environmental science and can have disastrous effects when implemented as policy.

Sri Lanka: A Cautionary Fail

Nowhere has this been more poignant in recent times than in Sri Lanka, where green idealism and a priori assumptions led to catastrophic crop failure last year. The country is still struggling to overcome the resulting economic crisis.

In April 2021, President Gotabaya Rajapaksa led his country on a path that would transform it from a thriving food exporter to an importer of rice and other crops, in need of emergency economic assistance. The Sri Lankan government banned the use and importation of synthetic nitrogen fertilizers in a naïve “great experiment” in green policy-making and self-reliance.

As it turns out, policies based on idealism don’t tend to work well on the ground, as many land managers and agricultural advisers know all too well. Nevertheless, this myopic nitrogen-cutting strategy hasn’t slowed down, with similar approaches being sold to nations worldwide.

What went wrong, and why did the “great experiment” fail so catastrophically?

Can Organic Farming Feed the World?

The Bible envisions a world of peace and plenty—an agricultural utopia where “everyone will sit under their own vine and under their own fig tree.” Ideally, if every family had enough land with time to cultivate it and grow their own food, an organic approach would be realistic.

The problem is that few have the wherewithal, time, or ability to purchase land and work a small-acre farm. Additionally, most of the world’s population is congregated in large cities



People protest Sri Lanka’s economic crisis at the entrance of the president’s office in Colombo on March 15.

lacking open spaces; many others live on nonarable or unproductive land, like nonirrigated arid lands or lithic (shallow and rocky) soils. So, the world depends on large, industrial-scale farms where a strictly organic approach is economically unprofitable and pragmatically unrealistic.

Organic farming requires a great deal of hands-on management, and transporting organic sources like manure is prohibitively expensive for large low-margin farms already stretched by rising fuel costs. Certainly, a gradual movement toward increased use of organics is very important to maintain soil health, in addition to being a responsible way to utilize organic waste. The problem is that governments and ideologues

have moved too fast—far too fast for the soil and society to adjust.

The World Economic Forum (WEF) and other globalist groups are enthusiastic fans of the “17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs),” among which are zero hunger (No. 2) and climate action (No. 13). The SDGs were originally put forward by the United Nations, “as a blueprint to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all,” and to “address the interconnected global challenges we face” and “are designed to leave no one behind.”

“Human life depends on the earth as much as the ocean for our sustenance and livelihood,” the SDG website reads. “Plant life provides 80 percent of our human diet, and we rely on agriculture

as an important economic resource and means of development. Forests account for 30 percent of the Earth’s surface, providing vital habitats for millions of species and important sources for clean air and water; as well as being crucial for combating climate change.”

The world is in the midst of a clash of worldviews—with agriculture, food production, and sustainability at the center. The WEF, like The Club of Rome before it, implicates humanity as the cause of the world’s environmental ills and advocates for population reduction. By contrast, the ancient Judeo-Christian injunction to dress and keep the garden frames humanity as the caretakers of the land and encourages them to “be fruitful and increase in number.”

By the WEF’s own admission, “scientists are still undecided on the Earth’s ‘carrying capacity’—the maximum number of

people it can support indefinitely—with estimates ranging widely between 500 million and more than one trillion.”

Our long-term viability has more to do with how we manage the Earth’s resources than with whether or not the planet has enough to go around. The Earth finds its highest potential to “bring forth” the resources its creatures need to survive when it has knowledgeable hands tending to it, not economic forums, nongovernmental organizations, or administrative bodies pushing one-size-fits-all standards.

Living Soil

The living soil environment is so complex that it defies generalizations and policies made in the halls of academia and meeting rooms. Differences in soil type—myriad combinations of sand, silt, clay, and organic matter—along with conditions such as temperature, precipitation, soil pH, parent material, and characteristics of the soil biome make the sum much more complicated than its parts.

Likewise, the complexity of the relationship between soils, plants, and the atmosphere makes climate change predictions nearly impossible to substantiate. The system—including the interconnections between the nitrogen cycle and the carbon cycle—is quite literally living, self-adjusting, and highly adaptable.

University studies, field tests, and statistical models can inform an integrated approach to managing the earth, but to best understand a patch of land, one needs to work it. Cropping systems must be carefully managed according to “best practices” that balance productivity with environmental protection. Humans are in a symbiotic relationship with the soil, and “ground truthing” assumptions matter more than endless studies. Just ask a Sri Lankan farmer how well the WEF ideologues’ management policies worked out.

While the practice of high-production agriculture is challenging due to the complexity of living systems, the

guiding principles of soil management are straightforward. Statistical models, academic papers, and university studies are only as good as the truth on the ground; yet there seems to be an endless supply of elaborate predictions, papers, and speeches that contain more pretense than truth.

The Nitrogen Cycle

The atmosphere we breathe is made up of about 78 percent nitrogen, primarily in the diatomic form. The element is about four times more abundant in the air than oxygen, and this equates to about 35,000 tons of nitrogen over every acre on the planet.

If only there were a way to capture a fraction of this nitrogen and incorporate it into the soil to grow crops, we would have enough nitrogen to feed the world! But plants can’t utilize this essential nutrient in its diatomic form. In other words, atmospheric nitrogen is unavailable to plants.

The world depends on large, industrial-scale farms where a strictly organic approach is economically unprofitable and pragmatically unrealistic.

Nature has a mechanism that converts this nitrogen into forms available for plants to utilize via a process called nitrogen fixation. Various soil organisms fix nitrogen by combining it with hydrogen or oxygen. Some live in root nodules of legumes like beans and peas; others are free-living in the soil. Lightning fixes small amounts of nitrogen, which enters the soil via rain.

Under normal conditions, the nitrogen cycle tends to be a closed loop, with low potential for nitrate leaching and runoff into waterways. However, natural systems alone can’t meet the crop production needed to feed the world.

Years of tilling native grasslands, extracting soil nutrients via heavy cropping, and failing to replace organic



A tractor sprays fertilizer onto crops. There's no reason why farmers shouldn't add supplemental nitrogen to facilitate the high crop production needed to feed the world.

matter depleted the rich, humic soils of the Great Plains and resulted in the "Dust Bowl" of the 1930s. The U.S. government responded by creating the Soil Conservation Service in 1935 (now called the Natural Resources Conservation Service), tasking it with educating farmers and helping them implement sustainable soil management practices.

Governments and ideologues have moved too fast—far too fast for the soil and society to adjust.

Organic matter sustains "living soil," which is vital to the sustainability of the planet as well as beneficial to human health. The greatest benefits of organic inputs such as manure, composts, and

green manures (i.e., cover crops) include increased soil structure and water-holding capacity, enhancement of soil life, addition of micronutrients (boron, chlorine, copper, iron, manganese, molybdenum, zinc, and nickel), and other important benefits. However, the nitrogen contained in organic sources is not somehow more pure or nutritive than nitrogen that is produced synthetically.

Plants can't utilize nitrogen in its organic form. Nitrogen bound in organic matter must be converted into inorganic forms—primarily nitrate and ammonium—by soil microbes in a multistep process known as "mineralization." The rate at which this transformation occurs is largely determined by temperature, moisture, and soil properties. For instance, the process of nitrification (whereby ammonium converts

to nitrate) takes about one to two weeks at 75 degrees Fahrenheit, and 12 weeks at 50 degrees.

Only a small percentage of organic matter mineralizes in a given growing season, so an organic approach requires a gradual accumulation of a soil nitrogen reservoir over several years. The goal is to reap the cumulative residual nitrogen release from multiple years, like putting money into the bank a little bit faster than you spend it. By switching to a solely organic approach within a season, Sri Lankan farmers were forced to overdraw their soil "account," and the soil went bankrupt.

Even with years to accumulate soil organic matter, the nitrogen needs of high-production cropping systems may not be met by organics alone, and there's a limiting factor: Applying too much manure or compost in a single season can cause a toxic buildup of salts and heavy metals in the soil.

Meat Free?

The WEF asserts that if we want to save the Earth, we can no longer afford to keep eating meat. As Sir David Attenborough proudly said of his personal efforts to "save the planet" by eating less meat, "We are omnivores, so biologically, if you could have a biological morality, you can say, yes we evolved to eat pretty well everything. But now we've got to a stage in our own social evolution in which that is no longer practical."

But this proposed solution sets up a dilemma: Reducing livestock means less manure for growing plants. Increased dependence on vegetarian diets also creates an increased need for nitrogen fertilizer. What to do?

There are really only two reasonable options: divide the land into smaller parcels for families to work, and thereby meet a portion of their own food needs, or supplement organics with synthetic fertilizer to make larger farms productive and profitable. Nitrogen is nitrogen. The plants don't "care" where it comes from.

The WEF, taking a page from the Marxist playbook, is pursuing a third option, which is completely unreasonable. It seems intent on abolishing private property and putting food production into the hands of a world government to meet sustainability goals. Not a great plan.

Synthetic Fertilizer Production Fixes Nitrogen

It turns out scientists did indeed discover ways to capture atmospheric nitrogen and convert it to forms plants can use. The fertilizer industry simply "fixes" nitrogen from the atmosphere, much as nature does.

It also turns out that while the supply of atmospheric nitrogen is virtually unlimited, sources of hydrogen are not. So the production of ammonia fertilizer, for example, derives the needed hydrogen from natural gas or other hydrocarbons and combines it with nitrogen from the air to form anhydrous ammonia. When managed correctly, this technology offers a sustainable way to harvest nitrogen in step with nature's nitrogen cycle.

While a portion of a crop's nitrogen can and should be met by organic amendments, there's no reason why farmers can't add supplemental nitrogen to facilitate the high crop production needed to feed the world. Many farmers, aided by guidance from soil scientists and agency professionals, are very skilled at applying just enough. These are, after all, the kind of professionals who reversed the effects of the Dust Bowl through the application of sound soil management practices.

Environmental damage from nitrogen leaching to groundwater and surface waters and volatilization to the atmo-

sphere doesn't occur due to the source of nitrogen. Manures and composts can also cause these problems.

Environmental degradation and contamination come from agricultural mismanagement ... and that's why we need well-trained farmers, not ideologically driven policymakers, to manage the land. ■

(Below) Reducing livestock would mean less manure for growing plants.

(Bottom) The living soil environment is so complex that it defies generalizations and policies made in halls of academia and meeting rooms.



LOOKWISE FROM L: WESTENDIG/GETTY IMAGES; WILLIANTHOMAS/GETTY IMAGES; FLORENT VERONESI/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

AGRICULTURE

CONSEQUENCES OF SRI LANKA'S AGROCHEMICAL BAN

Rice yields fell approximately 40 percent in 2021 after ban

Commentary | By Rohan Rajapakse & Nathan Worcester



YOU MAY REMEMBER THE headlines. In 2021, Sri Lanka's government imposed a total ban on agrochemicals. The restrictions affected both chemical fertilizers and pesticides.

The government changed course in late 2021, but the damage had already been done.

Yields fell dramatically, fueling anger in the streets. By mid-2022, the country was convulsed by explosive protests. In a matter of months, the prime minister

and president both resigned.

A nation that once grew enough rice to feed itself was reduced to begging for handouts from India and China. That outcome is as devastating as it was predictable.

What happened to my country—and what can its painful lesson teach the world?

President Chooses Scarcity Over Food Security

The people of Sri Lanka have been growing rice for thousands of years. The ancient Sinhalese built massive irrigation works to support large-scale rice cultivation.

Because of the 20th century's green revolution and the efforts of researchers in Sri Lanka's agriculture department, the country significantly boosted its rice production, achieving larger yields than ever before. The country also recently reached self-sufficiency in vegetable growing.

Yet in early 2021, during the primary rice planting season known as "Maha," things suddenly changed.

Prominent Sri Lankans pressured then-President Gotabaya Rajapaksa to switch the country over completely to organic farming. The stated motivations included avoiding diseases, including kidney disease, that have been linked to synthetic pesticides in Sri Lanka.

In April 2021, over the objections of scientists, Rajapaksa pulled the trigger on a sweeping agrochemical ban.

The considerations guiding Rajapaksa's choice are still murky. In the months that followed, Sri Lankans discovered why no other country in the world uses only organic manure for its fertilizer—

Police use water cannons to disperse farmers demanding the resignation of Sri Lanka's President Gotabaya Rajapaksa over the country's ongoing economic crisis, in Colombo on July 6.

and why Bhutan abandoned a similar scheme a decade ago.

The Fertilizer Crisis

I'm one of the scientists who objected to the president's decision at the time.

My fellow scientists and I argued that a rapid and complete shift to organic agriculture would cause widespread hunger. We were right.

According to the U.N. World Food Program, some 6 million Sri Lankans—a third of the nation's population—are now food-insecure. That's up significant-

ly from 2014–16 when the U.N.'s Food and Agriculture Organization reported that just 6 percent of the population faced moderate or severe food insecurity.

The turn to organic farming was motivated by concerns with the natural environment and would supposedly make things better. Yet organic farming is no panacea.

Manure is a source of greenhouse gases. It can also contribute to heavy metal pollution.

Of course, concerns over chemical fertilizers are far from baseless. When used indiscriminately for long periods, those agrochemicals can denude the soil of symbiotic microorganisms. That, in turn, can increase farmers' dependence on chemical fertilizers, creat-

ing a vicious cycle.

The wisest course of action is to combine organic and chemical fertilizers, protecting the soil while maintaining crop productivity. Such a strategy also lets farmers tailor their approach to particular crops, which can have very specific nutrient demands.

While adding compost can enhance soil texture and replenish vital micronutrients, it isn't enough to meet the fertilizer requirements of high-yield rice varieties—the cornerstones of Sri Lanka's agricultural sector.

It boils down to basic science. Compost is just 2 percent nitrogen, while a common, low-cost nitrogen fertilizer, ♦

46%

COMPOST IS

just 2 percent nitrogen, while a common, low-cost nitrogen fertilizer, urea, is about 46 percent nitrogen.

6 MILLION

SRI LANKANS ARE now food insecure, amounting to a third of the nation's population, according to the U.N. World Food Programme.



A person works inside a rice mill in Tissamaharama, Sri Lanka, on April 24. A nation that once grew enough rice to feed itself has been reduced to begging for handouts from India and China.

THE IRONY IS THAT FOREIGN AGRICULTURAL IMPORTS COULD VERY WELL HAVE BEEN PRODUCED WITH VAST QUANTITIES OF POISONOUS PESTICIDES.

urea, is about 46 percent nitrogen.

Pesticides, another target of the ban, can also be environmentally harmful when overused or misapplied. Many Sri Lankan farmers do, in fact, use pesticides excessively; they're an easy means of eliminating vermin and a path to greater profits.

Yet instead of promoting integrated pest management or other proven tactics to curb pesticide use, the state made things more baffling for farmers.

The country's Department of Agriculture was decentralized, and provincial governments came to exercise greater influence. (Many of my colleagues and

I want these changes reversed.)

Government agencies, private pesticide companies, leading farmers, and nongovernmental organizations bombarded Sri Lankan farmers with conflicting messages. That made it hard for them to know what to do.

Even today, after the lifting of the agrochemical ban, farmers can't easily get their hands on pesticides.

Bungled Execution by Government

When the agrochemical ban came into effect, Sri Lanka's Ministry of Agriculture encouraged farmers to use organic manure.

Yet an island-wide program to produce organic manure soon ran up against a harsh reality: The country can't generate enough manure to fertilize the roughly 500,000 hectares of land earmarked for cultivation during Maha.

In addition, no one taught the farmers, who were accustomed to chemical fertilizers, how to apply organic manure. Huge amounts of water were wasted, too.

Rice yields fell approximately 40 percent. Tea farms and flower farms also suffered greatly. In addition to jeopardizing food security and the country's economic independence, that drop cost rural farmers a lot of money. The total losses caused by the agrochemical ban are still a mystery.

Now, Sri Lankans must eat rice from China and India. There's a bitter irony here: That foreign rice could very well have been produced with vast quantities of poisonous pesticides! Just as with the cost of the agrochemical ban, we simply don't know what the impacts will be.

Worries about agricultural goods from China have become a theme in Sri Lanka.

In late 2021, a government agreement to secure seaweed-based organic manure from a Chinese company went south after scientists from the University of Peradeniya, along with the National Plant Quarantine Service of the Department of Agriculture, detected harmful microorganisms in an early batch.

The government refused to accept the consignment from a Panamanian ship, the Hippo Spirit. The Hippo Spirit then refused to leave Sri Lankan waters for weeks. Sri Lanka ultimately paid \$6.7 million for the toxic cargo.

The government also lost a lot of money after it imported massive quantities of Nano Raja, an artificial compound manufactured in India. Farmers found that Nano Raja was ineffective on crops and attractive to unwanted large animals, such as wild boars.

Sri Lanka has pieced together a few harvests through urea imports and similar moves. Yet, as the U.N.'s food security numbers show, it's still on the brink.

I believe my country needs something like India's Planning Commission—a body of experts from various universities, institutes, and other organizations capable of advising the government on national policy.

That would be much better than an expert class that serves as henchmen for influential politicians. Perhaps Sri Lanka isn't alone in that problem. ■



President Joe Biden arrives for a press conference at the White House on Nov. 9.

PHOTO BY MANDEL NGAN/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

Biden Extends Trump-Era National Emergency, Investment Bans on China-Linked Companies

PRESIDENT JOE BIDEN IS EXTENDING A Trump-era national emergency that prohibits U.S. companies or individuals from investing in companies linked to China's military.

Then-President Donald Trump issued Executive Order 13959 in November 2020, citing threats to national security. The order declared a national emergency to halt investments in companies with ties to China's military.

Biden later expanded on the order in June 2021 with Executive Order 14032, which prohibited U.S. investments in companies affiliated with China's military or surveillance industries.

Biden's latest order will extend the national emergency regarding investment in China's military and surveillance companies by one year beyond its previously scheduled end date of Nov. 12.

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“*[The midterm election is] definitely not a Republican wave.*”

Sen. Lindsey Graham (R-S.C.), in an interview with NBC.



“**The massive harms and destruction from lockdowns and school closures cannot just be simply ignored and forgiven.**”



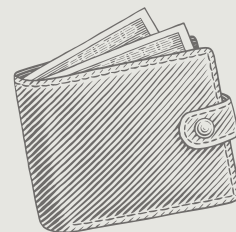
Dr. Scott Atlas, former COVID-19 adviser to President Donald Trump, in response to calls for amnesty for people who pushed shutdowns, masking, and vaccines during the pandemic.

11,000 JOBS

Facebook parent company Meta will slash 13 percent of its staff, or more than 11,000 employees, as it faces a revenue crunch as advertisers pull back amid high inflation.

200,000 AMERICANS

were at least 60 days behind their auto loan payments in the third quarter, which is the highest rate of delinquencies in more than a decade, according to TransUnion.



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1 in 6 Managers — Researchers have discovered that 16 percent of hiring managers in a survey were directed to deprioritize white men when evaluating candidates. Moreover, 14 percent were encouraged to deprioritize hiring white women.

\$3.95 BILLION

Elon Musk has sold 19.5 million shares of Tesla, worth \$3.95 billion, from Nov. 4 to Nov. 8, according to filings with the Securities and Exchange Commission.

\$1.3 TRILLION

In the third quarter, the market lost \$1.3 trillion, or 7.6 percent in equity, as home values nationwide began to fall, marking it the largest quarterly decline on record, according to Black Knight.



Virginia Giuffre (2nd R), an alleged victim of Jeffrey Epstein, at a federal courthouse in New York on Aug. 27, 2019.

JUDICIARY

Dershowitz Accuser Drops Lawsuit

THE WOMAN WHO ACCUSED attorney Alan Dershowitz of sexually abusing her is now saying she may have been mistaken. Her defamation lawsuit against Dershowitz is also being dropped.

“I have long believed that I was trafficked by Jeffrey Epstein to Alan Dershowitz. However, I was very young at the time, it was a very stressful and traumatic environment, and Mr. Dershowitz has from the beginning consistently denied these allegations,” Virginia Giuffre, formerly Virginia Roberts, said in a joint statement that announced the settlement of the suit. “I now recognize I may have made a mistake in identifying Mr. Dershowitz.”

The parties said that no payments were involved in the settlement, which also involved other related lawsuits.

Dershowitz, a professor emeritus of law at Harvard Law School, represented sex trafficker Epstein in the earliest criminal case against Epstein.

EMPLOYMENT

Florida Ranked No. 1 in Attracting Skilled Workforce

A NATIONAL LABOR MARKET analytics company has ranked Florida as No. 1 in attracting a skilled workforce, which it attributed to the state’s focus on training workers with technical skills and credentials.

For the past seven years, Lightcast’s 2022 Talent Attraction Scorecard has announced county rankings based on trends in education, overall job change, migration, skilled job change, competitive effect (jobs created above or below what is expected), and skilled job openings.

“An engaged workforce will increasingly be a prerequisite for a healthy talent pipeline,” the company stated.

“This year’s rankings capture the tumultuous COVID years, with education and jobs data from 2017–2021,” Lightcast added. “Rankings also capture the first wave of pandemic migration, with IRS migration data from 2016–2020.”

Lightcast estimated that Florida added more than 388,000 residents between 2016 and 2020.

MILITARY

Former Army Pilot Sentenced for Spying for China

A FORMER U.S. ARMY HELICOPTER pilot has been sentenced to 20 months in prison for spying on behalf of China’s communist regime.

Shapour Moinian was sentenced on Nov. 7 for his part in accepting thousands of dollars from representatives of the Chinese Communist Party in exchange for providing the regime with classified aviation-related information taken from his defense contractors who employed him.

“This was industrial espionage, bordering on military espionage. ... These were extremely serious offenses against the United States,” Judge Jeffrey Miller said at the sentencing.

ELECTION

Nebraskans Approve Voter ID Measure

NEBRASKANS HAVE APPROVED

a new voter photo identification requirement for future elections, handing a win to Republicans who for years have tried to get the election integrity measure passed in the state’s Legislature but was met with opposition.

Called Nebraska Initiative 432, the measure was on the ballot in the mid-term election as a proposal to amend the state’s constitution to require valid photo identification to cast a legal vote.

Just over 65 percent of Nebraska voters backed the initiative, which also authorizes the state Legislature to pass laws specifying the voter ID requirements.



Voters stand in line to cast their vote in Omaha, Neb., on Nov. 3, 2020.



Police officers transfer inmates from the Guayas 1 prison in response to an attempted prison riot in Guayaquil, Ecuador, on Nov. 3.

NATIONAL SECURITY

Latin American Countries Release Thousands of Criminals from Prison

OVERCROWDING IN LATIN AMERICA'S PRISONS has been prevalent in the region for decades.

The area has one of the highest incarceration rates in the world, with detention numbers averaging 163 percent of prison capacity as of 2020.

The leaders of five nations closest to the U.S. southern border are attempting a new approach to alleviate the problem.

Lawmakers in Mexico, Ecuador, and Nicaragua are offering early release to thousands of criminals with “minor offenses” or who are awaiting trial.

In Cuba and Venezuela, lawbreakers and regime offenders aren't only being released, many are being exiled.

Consequently, U.S. security analysts and legislators are voicing concerns. With security forces overwhelmed at the United States' besieged southern border, some say the door is wide open to those with a criminal past and no incentive to stay home.

MIDDLE EAST

Record Number of Foreigners Repatriated From ISIS Camps in Syria This Year

REPATRIATIONS OF FOREIGN women and children affiliated with the ISIS terrorist group from detention camps in northeast Syria hit a record high in 2022, Kurdish authorities said on Nov. 8.

Thousands of foreigners, including women and children, had gone to Syria to live in ISIS's so-called caliphate until 2019, when U.S.-backed Kurdish forces snatched the last pocket of Syrian territory from the terrorists.

Fleeing women and children were housed in overcrowded detention camps run by Kurdish authorities and international NGOs, which had pushed for repatriations due to rising violence and dire conditions in the camps.

Governments responded slowly, fearing security threats and a public backlash over the return of individuals radicalized by ISIS.

However, the pace picked up this year, with 517 women and children repatriated so far, according to Kurdish authorities' statistics.

UK

UK's Sunak Under Pressure as Minister Quits Following Bullying Allegation

BRITISH PRIME MINISTER Rishi Sunak faced pressure in Parliament on Nov. 9 after Cabinet minister Sir Gavin Williamson was forced to quit over allegations of abusive behavior toward colleagues.

Sunak defended giving Williamson a seat at the Cabinet table, saying he wasn't aware of “any of the specific concerns” about Williamson's past conduct.

Opposition leader Sir Keir Starmer accused Sunak of hiding behind bullies because he's “too weak” to take them on, saying Sunak gave Williamson a job “precisely” because he's a bully.

Williamson, who was appointed minister without portfolio, resigned on Nov. 8 saying the allegations had “become a distraction” from the government's “good work.”

CANADA

Canadian Navy to Mandate COVID-19 Boosters for Sailors, Leaked Memo Shows

THE ROYAL CANADIAN NAVY (RCN) has mandated that all sailors stationed at sea receive up-to-date COVID-19 vaccinations, which includes at least one booster shot “within the last six months.”

“My direction remains that only sailors with up to date vaccinations, defined as the primary vaccination series plus either a booster within the last 6 months or a confirmed recovery from a COVID-19 infection within the last 6 months, be employed or undergo training as a member of crew aboard HMC ships and submarines,” RCN Vice-Admiral Angus Topshee wrote in a Nov. 4 unclassified memo obtained by The Epoch Times.

Topshee said that all navy members who choose not to receive vaccine boosters will be “posted ashore immediately and can not draw sea duty allowance.”

Perspectives

A pedestrian walks past a bank billboard in Hong Kong on June 12, 2012. Foreign firms only care about how they can continue to make money from Hong Kong as its freedoms shrivel, columnist Thomas McArdle says.

PHOTO BY PHILIPPE LOPEZ/AFP/GETTYIMAGES

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THE NOT-SO-GREAT WALL STREET OF CHINA
The moral compass of banks is limited to self-absorbed profit. **56**



HIGH INFLATION: WHO'S TO BLAME?
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INSIDE

Thomas McArdle



The Not-So-Great Wall Street of China

The moral compass of banks is limited to self-absorbed profit

THE MORAL TRUTH about capitalism was eloquently argued by George Gilder in his 1981 opus “Wealth and Poverty,” which is often referred to as the bible of the Reagan administration. “Not from greed, avarice, or even self-love can one expect the rewards of commerce, but from a spirit closely akin to altruism, a regard for the needs of others, a benevolent, outgoing, and courageous temper of mind.”

The tax cut-fueled Reagan prosperity that followed the Jimmy Carter malaise provided real-world vindication for the rich sociological evidence that Gilder brought to bear against the intellectual status quo within academia regarding the free market. But Gilder never contended it wasn’t possible for men who make a lot of money to be stupid and treacherous.

After so much work has gone into documenting that markets are moral and socialism is dangerous, Wall Street big names come along and rejuvenate the caricature of capitalists as greedy, unpatriotic, and ultimately self-destructive robber barons incapable of awareness of the long term. The father of free market thought, Adam Smith, believed that businessmen “seldom gather together except to conspire against the public interest.” And in Hong Kong at the beginning of November, the American financial CEOs who gathered with the enabler of that free market hub’s oppressors proved Smith right.

At the Global Financial Leaders’ Investment Summit, an audience of 250 that included CEOs David Soloman of Goldman Sachs, James Gorman of Morgan Stanley, and BlackRock President Rob Kapito heard Hong Kong government Chief Executive John Lee Ka-chiu tellingly declare that “the global advantage and the China advantage come together” in the city.

“This unique convergence makes Hong Kong the irreplaceable connection between the mainland and the rest of the world.” Citi Group CEO Jane Fraser was set to be in attendance but contracted COVID.

American financial CEOs gathered in Hong Kong at the beginning of this month, proving Adam Smith right.

Lee is a collaborator with communist mainland China in the ongoing suppression of free speech and assembly in Hong Kong, which includes the recent kangaroo court fraud conviction of media luminary Jimmy Lai. Lee and 10 other Hong Kong government officials were sanctioned by the Trump administration’s Treasury Department, sanctions that the Biden administration has continued.

For Lee to tout the besieged region—for so many decades the shining beacon of freedom and prosperity in Asia—as the connection between the free world’s expansionist adversary, which just bestowed Chinese leader Xi Jinping with permanent Mao-like dictatorial powers, and the investment capital of democratic countries is akin to a campaign enticing foreign investors to place their faith in a rising Germany in the mid and late 1930s.

For many decades, investors and consumers alike around the world have benefited from the Hong Kong miracle—a tiny region with few natural resources, except its people, that came to be the home of millions because of a government boasting minimal corruption; rock-solid rule of law governed by a fully independent judiciary; taxation half that of the United States with zero capital gains and interest taxes; zero sales tax; zero

value-added taxes; and hardly any regulatory burdens, tariffs, or government debt.

Famously, Hong Kong has welcomed and assisted foreign firms seeking to take root in the city, who enjoy policies that include nothing in the way of foreign exchange controls or restrictions on the nationality of corporate ownership.

You would think when hundreds of thousands of Hong Kong’s people began demonstrating in 2019 against growing communist oppression—including the ability to extradite dissenters to mainland China—and thousands of protesters were violently arrested, that the non-Chinese who have made fortunes thanks to Hong Kongers would come to their side in their time of trouble. You would think they’d criticize their oppressors.

Instead, they prioritize money over people. They come to Hong Kong not to stand in the streets in solidarity with the protesters, but to sit in the luxury of the Four Seasons Hotel listening to the living conduit between the communists and the region tell them how they can continue to make money from Hong Kong as its freedoms shrivel.

Whenever someone who has spent his whole life distrusting entrepreneurs and financiers because he believes their moral compass extends no further than self-absorbed profit begins to see what George Gilder illuminated—that capitalism is actually driven by creative people giving their energy, imagination, and organizational skills, sacrificing their time and wealth to provide others with a new good or service, despite no guarantee of success and reward—we can depend on the likes of Goldman Sachs, Morgan Stanley, BlackRock, and Citigroup, in their foolishness, avarice, and absence of patriotism, to extinguish it immediately.

Anders Corr



Chinese Slavery Beyond China

Chinese gangs enslave cyberscammers throughout Southeast Asia

DO MYSTERIOUS PEOPLE send you messages on social media that simply say, “Hi”? I never answer.

Likely as not, they’re scammers in Southeast Asia under the management of Chinese cybergangs. That little “Hi” is one of their strategies, according to VOD, a Cambodian media outlet that deserves a Pulitzer. It creates curiosity in the scam victim, or “mark,” that gets the conversation going.

As many as 100,000 foreign nationals work for cybercriminals in Cambodia, according to Cambodian Interior Ministry Secretary Sok Phal. Yet the Cambodian government does little to close the scam factories in which the workers are often imprisoned.

A recent report in the Los Angeles Times states, “The Cambodian government has given Chinese crime syndicates free rein to bring in tens of thousands of foreign men and women who—according to human rights organizations and their own accounts—are held captive to work in crowded cyber scam mills.”

Chinese, Vietnamese, Malaysian, Taiwanese, Indonesian, Burmese, and Thai nationals are among those confined in the scammer compounds that sometimes grow as large as self-enclosed towns, holding thousands of people each. Guards take passports from victims and stand guard at doors. Workers fall into debt peonage and can only buy freedom for as much as \$30,000 each.

Some of the compounds are hotel or casino groups, including in Cambodia’s capital city of Phnom Penh. The scams include gambling, romance, and pornography. Scammers who don’t cooperate are beaten, electrocuted, sold, or worse.

Workers sell for thousands of dollars each on messaging apps that include their photos. One had a man bloodied

with missing fingers. A gang allegedly sent another to an underground blood bank that drew his blood so many times that in order to find a vein and keep it flowing, they had to cut into his thigh.

After news reports, the emergence of videos, and diplomatic pressure to free particular captives, Cambodian officials finally conducted raids in September. Thousands of slaves were freed, but for the most part, the Chinese and Cambodian regimes are looking the other way. A few raids demonstrate the rule of law, but the scammers are bussed to less visible parts of Southeast Asia, including Burma and Laos.

As many as 100,000 foreigners work for cybercriminals in Cambodia, according to Interior Ministry Secretary Sok Phal.

The Times report alleges a cozy relationship between officials and Chinese syndicates that focus attention on Cambodia’s endemic corruption and relationship with China.

Chinese police and China’s embassy in Cambodia denied help to an enslaved Chinese man named Lin (VOD changed his real name to protect him) in a hotel complex controlled by gangs with links to legitimate Chinese companies and Cambodian officials, according to a VOD report.

Lin was captured, his phone was taken, and he was forced to work in a romance scam that targeted women aged 25 to 40 in places such as Malaysia, Singapore, the United States, and Europe in an attempt to get tens of thousands of dollars from each.

The detainee only had his phone returned as a reward for seeming to participate in the scam to win his captors’ trust. Then he did internet re-

search and made inquiries of officials and nonprofit rescue groups from the bathroom of the factory.

Gangs detain their unwilling scammers within large business compounds that masquerade as hotel groups and technology centers.

Chinese, Cambodian, and Vietnamese rescue teams help free detainees, including “Zhang,” whose name also was changed in the VOD report.

“Zhang said he eventually got in touch with a Chinese entrepreneur-run rescue team, texting them daily until early November, when Cambodian military police came into the Sihanoukville ‘Crown’ compound and brought Zhang out,” the report reads.

Sihanoukville is a seedy casino town on Cambodia’s coast.

In another operation to “arrest” Chinese and Thai slaves, Cambodian police kept their processes, raids, and interrogations secret from Thai police, who initiated the action and wanted more direct involvement. Thai police issued 71 warrants for Thais, of which only 21 resulted in repatriation. Cambodian officials didn’t release the Chinese scammers whom Thai police tried to arrest.

Similar Chinese gangs are linked to Philippine offshore gaming operators, in which local reporting reveals the enslavement of Chinese, Malaysians, and Burmese people, for example, to convince the marked victims to gamble online. Cyberslaves in the Philippines are bought and sold just as they are in Cambodia.

Chinese gangs are extending modern slavery from the Beijing-supported versions of Uyghurs in Xinjiang to well beyond China’s borders in Southeast Asia. This is our own future if we allow the Chinese Communist Party to continue toward its goal of global domination. The export of Chinese gangs to the periphery of China is one of many ways that Beijing extends its malign influence.



The GDP Offers No Comfort

Weak sales and production will soon lead to a softening jobs market

AFTER TWO QUARTERS OF decline earlier this year, the nation's real gross domestic product (GDP) ticked up in the summer quarter. Political needs will point to the news in predictable ways, but practically speaking, the modest 2.6 percent annualized growth changes nothing in the underlying economic picture.

Things remain weak and on the verge of recession, if the economy isn't already in one.

Since there's some debate over the definition of recession, the matter can be put this way: If, as some contend, the two declining quarters earlier this year count as a recession, then the third quarter's paltry real gain hardly says that the ordeal is over. The statistical picture of the quarter points to future declines. If, as others contend, the two down quarters don't yet count as a proper recession, then the third quarter describes more of the already evident weakness and warns that recession is close.

This preliminary third-quarter growth figure looks positive enough to stand, even after the inevitable revisions made by the Commerce Department statisticians in November and December. The final figure may even be slightly higher. But whether the revisions edge up or down, the picture will remain one of weakness. Certainly, this range of growth looks poor enough compared with the almost 6.0 percent growth averaged over the four quarters of 2021.

It also shows an extension of the softening trend that started earlier in the year. With the third-quarter GDP 1.8 percent over levels of 2021's third quarter, there's quite an erosion from the 3.7 percent growth momentum real GDP showed as it entered 2022.

As usual, the American consumer is key. Consumer spending constitutes at least two-thirds of overall GDP. It rose at only a 1.4 percent annualized rate from the second to the third quarter. It is barely 2.0 percent above year-ago levels and shows a marked decline from the almost 5.0 percent growth momentum consumer spending had at the start of the year. More telling still is that only spending on services increased. Spending on goods declined at a 1.2 percent annual rate in the third quarter. Consumers begin cutbacks with spending on goods, as it takes longer to cut back on most service arrangements. Since after-tax income is hardly growing in real terms, it is hard to see any coming improvement in this trend.

This picture of continued weakness, if not outright decline, should set the tone for this last quarter of the year and at least the opening months of 2023.

Of course, steeply rising mortgage rates have precipitated a sharp decline in housing—what the Commerce Department statisticians refer to as “residential construction.” This measure fell at a 26.4 percent annual rate in the summer quarter—greatly exaggerating the slide that began earlier in the year, which produced a 3.1 percent annualized drop in the first quarter and a 17.8 percent drop in the second. Business investment in productive facilities and equipment also showed weakness, but nothing this extreme. It's noteworthy that even spending on research and technology, which had

increased at a robust 10.0 percent annualized rate on average during the first half of the year, rose at only a 6.9 percent rate during the third quarter.

Also indicating a soft economy is how the summer quarter's GDP would have shown no growth at all were it not for the nation's foreign account. Because the world economy faces shortages of food and energy, U.S. exports surged during the third quarter, rising at a 14.4 percent annual rate. Much of this increase was in petroleum products. This is a little strange, since domestic production cutbacks over the past year and a half have eliminated what was once a considerable American energy surplus. It would seem, then, that much of the reduction in the nation's strategic petroleum reserve has gone overseas.

At the same time, the slowdown in consumer spending caused imports to drop at a 6.9 percent annualized rate. Because exports count as a positive in the GDP and imports count as a negative, the net of them contributed some 2.8 percent to overall real GDP growth. And since this figure is actually higher than the overall GDP growth estimate, it should be clear how weak the domestic economy really is.

This picture of continued weakness, if not outright decline, should set the tone for this last quarter of the year and at least the opening months of 2023. To be sure, a countertrend remains in still-strong hiring trends. Many in the media have even suggested that these contrary trends make this cycle unique. It's not. The seeming countertrends are a function of the well-established lag between changes in activity and those in the labor market. As those lags work out, the labor market will show the weakness, and soon.



High Inflation: Who's to Blame?

The Biden administration sharpens its attacks on oil companies

PRESIDENT JOE BIDEN recently accused oil and gas companies of “war profiteering” as they post record profits amid soaring energy prices. He handed the fossil fuel industry an ultimatum: boost production or face a windfall tax on record profits.

Ahead of the midterm elections, the Biden administration and Democrats in Washington hammered home the message that it's corporate greed that's leading to pain at the pump and broader inflationary pressures. But this isn't the first time the Democrats have flirted with such a tax.

Early this year, Sen. Sheldon Whitehouse (D-R.I.) and Rep. Ro Khanna (D-Calif.) submitted legislation that would force oil and gas companies to owe a per-barrel tax equal to 50 percent of the difference between the present price and the pre-pandemic average price per barrel between 2015 and 2019. Revenues from the plan would have been used to fund another stimulus check.

The Big Oil Windfall Profits Tax Act was introduced, but nothing else has transpired since March.

More recently, Robert Reich, former labor secretary and Berkeley professor, has repeatedly written in Twitter posts that “corporations are jacking up prices, blaming inflation, and padding their margins.”

“Big Oil is using the cover of inflation to line their pockets. Shell raked in \$9.45 billion in profits last quarter and has announced \$4 billion in stock buybacks,” he noted in an Oct. 31 Twitter post. “For once, let's take aim at an actual driver of inflation and enact a windfall profits tax on Big Oil.”

Yet dissent was public. Former Treasury Secretary Larry Summers, for example, wasn't so quick to endorse a windfall tax on the energy



The energy sector lagged the rest of the market after it hit a peak in the summer of 2014.

sector, warning that it would “discourage investment.”

“I'm not sure I understand the argument for a windfall profits tax on energy companies. If you reduce profitability, you will discourage investment, which is the opposite of our objective,” Summers wrote on Twitter. “If it is a fairness argument, I don't quite follow the logic, since even with the windfalls Exxon has underperformed the overall market over the last five years.”

Indeed, the energy sector lagged the rest of the market after it hit a peak in the summer of 2014. From June 2014 to October 2020, the S&P Oil & Gas Exploration & Production Select Industry Index, for example, tumbled by nearly 90 percent. By comparison, the broader S&P 500 Index rallied by about 75 percent during the same period.

However, Republicans were prompt to oppose the stern suggestion, saying that Biden's so-called windfall profits tax would cut production,

raise prices on families and businesses, and make the United States more dependent on foreign oil.

“We've seen this mistake before. This is a Carter-era tax hike that slashed production while making the United States more dependent on foreign oil,” Rep. Kevin Brady (R-Texas) said in a statement. “This couldn't come at a worse time for American families suffering under 40-year high inflation.”

The last time the United States imposed a similar levy was in 1980, and that caused as much as an 8 percent reduction in domestic output and a greater reliance on imports, according to the Congressional Research Service.

Garrett Watson, a senior policy analyst at the Tax Foundation, doesn't think taxing high-profit margins is a wise public policy pursuit if the objective is to incentivize more energy production.

“Higher profits is the market signal for firms to take advantage and increase their supply,” Watson told The Epoch Times.

Aside from the volatility of oil prices, the companies now “have to deal with the tax system” coming after them, he said.

“It's going to further disincentivize production, which is the wrong thing we want to be doing.”

In the end, according to American Petroleum Institute President and CEO Mike Sommers, global commodities markets set prices, not oil and gas companies.

“Rather than taking credit for price declines and shifting blame for price increases, the Biden administration should get serious about addressing the supply and demand imbalance that has caused higher gas prices and created long-term energy challenges,” Sommers said in a statement.

DANIEL LACALLE is chief economist at hedge fund Tressis and author of “Freedom or Equality,” “Escape from the Central Bank Trap,” and “Life in the Financial Markets.”

Daniel Lacalle



US Economy Is Fatter, Not Stronger

The third-quarter GDP isn't showing resiliency and sustained growth

THE HEADLINE GROSS domestic product (GDP) figure for the third quarter seemed to signal a return to growth and a significant improvement from the previous readings. Real GDP increased at an annual rate of 2.6 percent in the third quarter, in contrast to a decrease of 0.6 percent in the second quarter, according to the Bureau of Economic Analysis.

However, the reality of the economy is that stagnation persists.

If we look at the components of GDP, a few one-off surprises may reduce the optimism about the headline. The entire improvement came from a bounce in net trade as exports rose, mostly from natural gas and oil, and imports collapsed. This huge boost from the external sector is likely to reverse in the fourth quarter, as the nominal trade deficit widened to \$92 billion in September. The advance report shows that exports fell by 1.5 percent while imports rose by 0.8 percent. Furthermore, if the economy improves from lower imports in a quarter where domestic demand is stagnant, it clearly proves that overall demand is weaker.

Gross private domestic investment continues to be underwhelming and indicates a negative contribution to GDP of minus-1.59 while government consumption adds 0.42. Without the boost from government spending and net trade, the GDP would show a negative change.

Another crucial factor in the positive figure was consumption, adding 0.97 to GDP. While consumption remains solid, the pace is weaker and almost half of the contribution in the third quarter of 2021, as real disposable personal income—personal income adjusted for taxes and inflation—remains poor. It



The entire improvement came from a bounce in net trade as exports rose, mostly from natural gas and oil, and imports collapsed. This huge boost from the external sector is likely to reverse in the fourth quarter, as the nominal trade deficit widened to \$92 billion in September.

increased 1.7 percent in the third quarter but decreased 1.5 percent in the second quarter. Real disposable income is down 3.9 percent from a year ago.

One of the surprises and biggest drivers of improvement is the reduction in the GDP deflator, which stands at 4.1 percent—the lowest since the second quarter of 2020—when it was 9.1 percent in the previous quarter of 2022 and an average of 6 percent in almost seven quarters. A lower GDP deflator translates into a higher real GDP figure.

While consumption growth is still positive, it was offset by weak performance in investment, particularly residential investment, which contracted at a 26 percent annualized rate in the third quarter.

If we want to understand the strength of the domestic economy, the best way is to analyze the figure of final sales to domestic private purchasers, which slowed to 0.1 percent annualized in the third quarter, a significantly poorer reading than the growth of 0.5 percent in the second quarter.

The third quarter GDP figure isn't proving the resilience and robust growth of the United States; it's showing a stagnant domestic economy saved by the energy crisis abroad and lower demand for imported goods.

This GDP figure isn't good on its own, but it's even worse when analyzed in the context of a massive fiscal stimulus. In September, the public debt of the United States was around \$30.9 trillion, around \$2.5 trillion more than a year earlier. With a \$1.37 trillion deficit in fiscal year 2022, the recovery of the United States is shockingly poor. Those who consider deficit spending a tool for growth should be alarmed at the nonexistent fiscal multiplier of government spending and the rising structural debt.

The third quarter GDP isn't proof of the success of demand-side policies; it's evidence of the disastrous result of wrongly called stimulus plans.

The unstoppable trend of deficit and debt isn't stimulating anything except the size of government and the unsustainability of public accounts. The U.S. economy is in much better shape than the European Union or Japan, no doubt. But it isn't stronger. It's fatter.

JOE PAOLELLO/GETTY IMAGES

FANYU is an expert in finance and economics and has contributed analyses on China's economy since 2015.

Fan Yu

'China Dream' Ends

Western investors should stop fantasizing about China

WESTERN investors have been very patient, and even persistent, in believing for decades that China will be the new frontier, the investing “holy grail,” even.

After decades of investment and engagement with China, however, the country's ruling Chinese Communist Party (CCP) hasn't become more democratic. Now that the 20th Party Congress has come and gone, it's clear that the regime has become more insular. Xi Jinping's grip on power is tighter than ever. The government is more authoritarian and top-down than ever before. Its policy direction? Harder to read than at any time since the 1970s.

Investors hoping to get a read on what the CCP will do next, both economically and politically, were left disappointed.

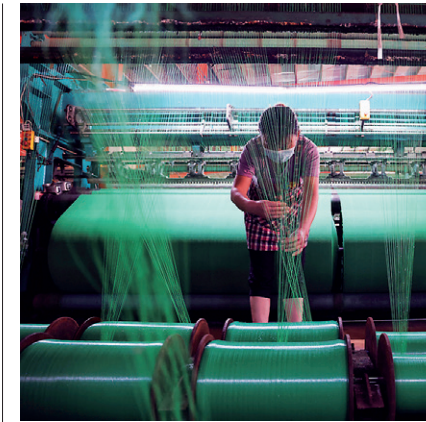
One of the biggest questions in the minds of Western investors leading up to the National Congress—whether the zero-COVID policy would continue—wasn't answered. Or, more accurately, the answer is that it likely would continue because that's Xi's wish.

It was wishful thinking on the part of Western investors hoping otherwise. The CCP's “grow and get rich” policy under previous Chinese leaders Jiang Zemin and Hu Jintao is no longer the mandate.

“Can China provide support to the global economy? Will China rekindle inflationary pressures?” Those were the questions posed in a recent Morgan Stanley research note on Oct. 31.

The sooner that China can exit from its zero-COVID policy, the better its economic outlook and its investment prospects.

But the truth is, Xi doesn't care. It may be a painful realization, but



CCP National Congress showed that politics, not economics, is a priority.

the CCP simply doesn't play by Western rules. By stacking the Politburo and Standing Committee with his allies, Xi now has a longer leash than ever before. Unlike Western leaders who face ongoing elections every few years, Xi doesn't need to deliver short-term results. And China's people? With the tightly controlled media and propaganda environment, they're far easier to bring into line than, say, Americans.

It appears that foreign investors are finally getting the message. China's financial markets sold off after the National Congress, both in Shanghai and Hong Kong. It's striking given that gross domestic product growth was more positive than expected, a sign that some investors are permanently leaving the Chinese market.

And that may be just fine for Xi. He has been steering China to become more nationalistic, more closed-off, and more self-dependent. He's put an emphasis on security and politics, even at the expense of the economy.

Another big question on the minds of investors concerns the real estate

development industry. Many foreign investors are holding dollar-denominated debt issued by Chinese developers, and it would have been great to get some assurances that Beijing has their back.

Well, there was no substantial development on that topic at the National Congress. Authorities are unlikely to allow the housing market to completely collapse. But the policy to de-lever the real estate developers was very deliberate and came straight from the top. The CCP is unlikely to suddenly reverse course, no matter how much Western investors are hoping for it.

There was also no reported easing of the CCP's regulatory scrutiny over the technology sector, a hotbed of foreign investment activity. Of Xi's seven appointees to the Politburo Standing Committee, none of them are proponents of the tech industry. The closest one may be Li Qiang, the former Shanghai party boss who orchestrated harsh COVID-19 lockdowns and also oversaw approvals for Tesla's gigafactory and the tech-friendly Star Market.

Li and others are now more likely to push the adoption of “common prosperity,” “Xi Jinping thought,” and political loyalty than they are tech-friendly policies. It's no wonder that shares of tech giants such as Tencent and Alibaba sold off sharply following the conclusion of the National Congress.

“The new administration doesn't look particularly business-friendly. ... There's every indication that party loyalty trumps everything else,” Richard Harris, CEO of Hong Kong-based Port Shelter Investment Management, told The New York Times in an Oct. 24 report.

Well, isn't that the understatement of the year. If they haven't already, Western investors need to abandon their “China dream” quickly.



“Our constitutional rights are supposed to be a reflection of our God-given freedoms.”

Jeff Childers, Florida attorney

THOUGHT LEADERS

Fighting Mask and Vaccine Mandates in Court

Attorney Jeff Childers on how he fought mandates and inspired other lawyers to do the same

“All of our rights come from the Creator,” says attorney Jeff Childers. “They don’t come from government. Our constitutional rights are supposed to be a reflection of our God-given freedoms.”

In a recent episode of EpochTV’s “American Thought Leaders,” host Jan Jekielek speaks with Childers, a bankruptcy attorney in Gainesville, Florida, who found himself stunned by the sudden imposition of a mandatory mask mandate. He launched himself into constitutional law and got the first appellate decision in the country finding mandatory masking presumptively unconstitutional.

In the past two years, Childers has battled in the courtroom against vaccine mandates and “hospital kidnappings.” After many lawyers reached out to Childers for advice, he set up an informal network around the country to share information and to help them launch similar lawsuits in their states.

JAN JEKIELEK: You’ve become involved in litigation around many issues surrounding COVID. How did you get started?

JEFF CHILDERS: I’m a commercial litigation attorney, which means I usually represent businesses. I’ve been doing that successfully for a long time. Then the pandemic came.

I was watching the first county commission meeting I had ever seen.



A nurse administers a dose of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine in Denver on Jan. 30, 2021.

When those commissioners passed the first countywide mandatory mask mandate in the state of Florida, something grabbed me in an almost spiritual way.

I looked at my wife and said, “There’s no way that’s constitutional. They can’t tell us we have to strap something to our faces. That’s insane.”

Now, I had never practiced constitutional or civil rights law in my entire career. I didn’t even know where to start.

But I fired off a demand letter to the county commission, hit the books, and within a week or two, I filed my first complaint against any government entity. I didn’t even know where to serve it. Who do you give it to, the mayor? I had to figure all that stuff out.

And as I do with any case with novel issues, I called my peers for advice. And every one of them said, “Jeff, why are you throwing your career away over this?” It was a real gut check. These are people I have profound respect for.

But I decided to push

through and tackle it. And the result put me into the middle of the hurricane. We won. We won on appeal. We got the only appellate decision in the entire country, as far as I know, finding that mandatory masking was presumptively unconstitutional.

This was the summer of 2020, the peak of mask hysteria, and there were very few attorneys willing to take these cases.

We started to get all kinds of cases, and very quickly, we challenged the vaccines. On my first vaccine case, we won, as far as I know, the first broad preliminary injunction against the government vaccine mandate in the country. We got death threats over that one.

MR. JEKIELEK: You said your first reaction was a spiritual experience. Why do you describe it that way?

MR. CHILDERS: I was an agnostic for most of my life, but in my early 40s, I had a spiritual experience. I started reading the Bible and going to church every

weekend. It was a complete transformation.

I started to be more in tune with suggestions that I felt were coming from a divine source, that weren’t anything I would’ve thought of on my own. The idea, for example, that I would sue the government would’ve never occurred to me.

So I had this spiritual conviction that what was happening was morally and ethically wrong. All of our rights come from the Creator. They don’t come from government. Our constitutional rights are supposed to be a reflection of our God-given freedoms.

MR. JEKIELEK: What did your wife think?

MR. CHILDERS: Michelle took up the cause and worked heroically at home. She was one of the original moms involved in the Moms for Liberty movement, for example, and she made countless phone calls and organized citizens who had never been politically active in their entire lives.

And that’s so remarkable. We’re seeing a revolution among the apolitical, among people who felt that if they minded their own business, did their job, took care of their kids, and participated in their community, everything would be fine. I don’t think they feel that way anymore. My wife is one of them.

MR. JEKIELEK: What made people suddenly become so active?

MR. CHILDERS: A lot of people were shocked that

LEFT PAGE: AMBER BERTRAND FOR THE EPOCH TIMES; THIS PAGE: MICHAEL CIAGLO/GETTY IMAGES

the world didn't work the way they thought it worked. It was an awakening, a profound experience, to have your worldview challenged so fundamentally. Then, to a lot of people, it seemed like the government came after the children. That flipped the switches of those protective instincts we have toward our kids.

When parents saw what their kids were being taught in those Zoom classes, it horrified them. Again, they had this worldview, which was shaped by how school was when they went to school. Reading, writing, arithmetic, class projects, Americana, that kind of thing. What they saw was completely different, and it just shredded their concept of ordered liberty.

Our public officials made horrible mistakes in the way they handled this pandemic. They made short-term expedient decisions to control an uncontrollable virus without considering the consequences. Sure, you can keep the folks locked down for a while, but they're going to come out, and they're going to see if those decisions made sense.

We're entering that phase now, the phase of accountability in which people are saying, "Was it worth it?" And the folks who were responsible are at some point going to be held accountable for the decisions they made.

MR. JEKIELEK: How many lawyers are doing this kind of work?

MR. CHILDERS: There are more lawyers now than there ever were, and that

number is increasing. I'm aware of medium-sized firms becoming involved and taking on these hospital kidnapping cases.

MR. JEKIELEK: What do you mean by that?

MR. CHILDERS: When COVID-19 hospitalizations were at their peak, many patients were entering the hospital for some completely different treatment, but were tested and admitted as COVID-19 patients and were put on a ventilator or given remdesivir against their wishes.

I can't tell you how many calls we got from panicked relatives who wanted us to use the legal process to force hospitals to offer patients alternative treatments or let them go. And the hospitals wouldn't do either one.

In one case, three corporate law firms were hired by a hospital to defend the hospital's position and keep that patient in the hospital when all the relatives wanted to get him out.

The hospital said he wasn't sufficiently stable to move. The relatives said they were willing to sign whatever releases the hospital wanted. They wanted him off the ventilator and in a different facility. We had a facility that was willing to take him and a doctor who was willing to take over his care, but the hospital probably spent hundreds of thousands of dollars fighting us to keep him in the hospital.

That's what I call a hospital kidnapping case. It doesn't make any sense. If you're the patient and you don't want them to treat

you anymore, why can't you make that decision in a free country?

MR. JEKIELEK: A lot of people don't believe there will be any accountability. What do you say to them?

MR. CHILDERS: I understand how they feel. It's incredibly frustrating what has happened. It's so obvious to many people that what happened was wrong. What we've seen in the past two years is that every major institution in this country has closed ranks to protect those wrongdoers. So that's a legitimate concern. But that's not how justice works. The wheels of justice move slowly, but they eventually will get there. I'll give you a tangible example.

When I first started litigating with these COVID-19 cases, judges didn't want to hear anything about it. They were totally close-minded. They have to run for election. What judge in the summer of 2020 wanted to be the anti-mask judge?

It's different now. I got an oral ruling from a federal judge in the Pensacola divi-

sion. He called out this hospital we were suing for their totally irrational vaccine mandate. He didn't give me the relief I wanted, but he went on and on about how disgusted he was about this irrational policy. I couldn't have gotten that during the first year of the pandemic.

We're also seeing study after study critical of the vaccines and the masking. When you add them up, there's a body of scholarship forming that's outside the control of the government.

So when I go into court next year, I'm going to have more ammunition. When I started, I had nothing to work with. It was all just people's hypotheses and what Dr. Anthony Fauci said. Now, I can point to all these studies. So there will be accountability. I can't tell you how long it's going to take. We're up against well-organized, well-resourced opponents who aren't going to give in easily. They can slow it down, but they can't hold it back forever. We will get accountability. ■

This interview has been edited for clarity and brevity.



Cashiers wearing protective masks work in a grocery store in the Bushwick neighborhood of Brooklyn in New York on April 2, 2020.

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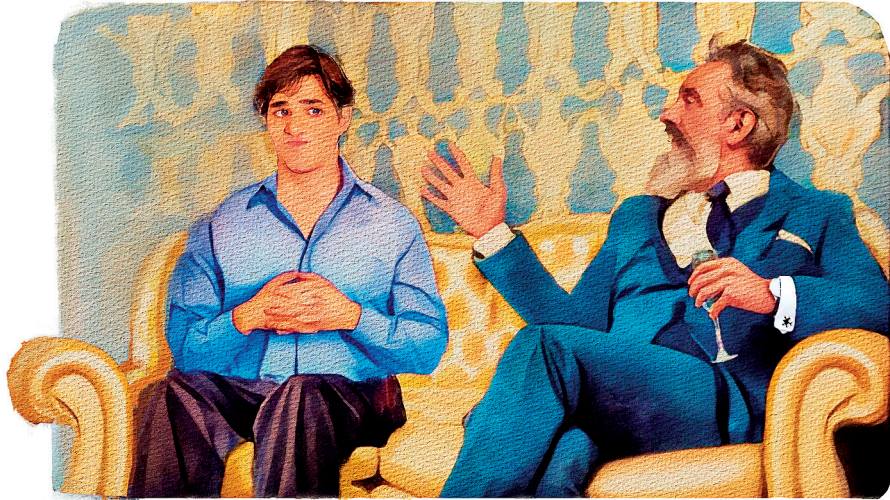


AN EPOCH TIMES DOCUMENTARY

Having Second Thoughts

Doubt can be a valuable counter-balance to confidence

By Jeff Minick



IN “ONCE AN EAGLE,” his novel about an American soldier, Anton Myrer quotes Army Gen. Joseph Stilwell:

“If a man has enough character to be a good commander, does he ever doubt himself? He should not. In my case, I doubt myself. Therefore, I am in all probability not a good commander.”

That question and its answer carry a great weight. Substitute almost any profession or position you like for the word commander—father, mother, priest, teacher, CEO, you name it—and self-doubt in a person of character would seem to indicate, as Stilwell implies, inadequacy. But is this the case?

If parents of good character, for example, question from time to time the choices and decisions they make when bringing up their children, does this interior battle mean that “in all probability” they’re bad parents?

The reality is that many of us bring doubts to any enterprise, ranging from marriage to investing in the market, from deciding whether to go to college to our choice of profession.

But are these uncertainties necessarily detriments? Or can self-doubt be a plus?

It seems to me the answer to these questions is a matter of degree, both in terms of doubt and its opposite: confidence.

Long ago, a man of my acquaintance wanted to open a bed-and-breakfast and restaurant in the small town

where I lived. The location was prime and the old building restorable, and he had more than enough wealth at his command. He sought to involve me in the enterprise—I owned and operated a local B&B—but after giving him tips and advice, most of which he dismissed, he also dismissed me, cutting me out of the project.

We need a confidence that at the same time permits the double-check of doubt.

Rather quickly, I discovered how fortunate I was, for in this undertaking, he exhibited a gargantuan self-centered conceit. He paid tens of thousands of dollars to install a pool behind the building, in a mountain town where the climate prevented swimming outdoors for nine months of the year. He opened a restaurant serving wines and exquisite dishes whose prices most locals couldn’t afford. He rented out rooms at exorbitant rates during the season, but for the rest of the year, the place stood nearly empty.

This establishment closed after three years or so. A few more years, and the deserted building was bulldozed and replaced by an auto parts store.

Here was a man whose ego entertained no doubts. In other words, here was arrogance in its worst guise.

Confidence, rather than this blind

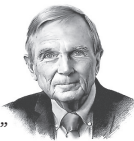
swagger, is a necessary ingredient in any successful enterprise. And confidence, that self-assurance where we’re aware not only of our strengths, but also of our weaknesses, allows plenty of wiggle room for doubt. Those doubts that spring up in our minds can serve us as warning bells—cautions to expect and prepare for the unexpected.

On the other hand, wallowing in uncertainties can pave the road to failure. To constantly change our minds and our plans can destroy a relationship or a business enterprise, confusing others and sapping their enthusiasm and support, and crippling us in the bargain. “Sir,” said that great ditherer of drama, Hamlet, to his friend Horatio, “in my heart there was a kind of fighting that would not let me sleep.” Those plagued by too many doubts often know well that toss-and-turn species of insomnia.

The takeaway? Arrogance and paralyzing doubts are faults best avoided. To succeed, we need a confidence that simultaneously permits the double-check of doubt.

“Vinegar Joe” Stilwell had many gifts, but in this instance, he was mistaken. As is almost always the case, balance is the key to a good life.

Jeff Minick lives and writes in Front Royal, Va. He is the author of two novels, “Amanda Bell” and “Dust on Their Wings,” and two works of nonfiction, “Learning as I Go” and “Movies Make the Man.”



Unwind

Dating back to 740 B.C., Palermo is one of the largest cities in Italy and the historic and cultural center of Sicily, offering travelers a wealth of memorable sights and experiences.

PHOTO BY GARY YEOWELL/GERRY IMAGES



Sicily’s City by the Bay 70

MOST ASSOCIATE ITALY with wine, so a first experience with the bittersweet amari liqueurs invented in Italy will be a delightful, pleasant surprise. **73**

OWNING A LATE-MODEL, luxury sedan, sports car, or SUV can be attainable without breaking the bank when you consider a thoroughly vetted certified pre-owned model. **74**

KNOWN AS ‘COMPLICATIONS,’ watches that monitor multiple time zones or track moon phases don’t always have seven-figure price tags. **77**

INSIDE

A Tropical Colonial

An impressive waterfront manor located in the Bahamas' exclusive Ocean Club Estates

By Phil Butler



The common areas were skillfully designed to complement the home's Colonial-style architecture with period-correct tall ceilings.

SET WITHIN THE LUXURIOUS OCEAN Club Estates community on Paradise Island in the Bahamas, is this 19,508-square-foot Colonial-style manor with 230 feet of waterfront frontage, protected by private entry gates.

Designed by the firm of Bridges Marsh, known for creating exceptional Palm Beach mansions, the estate features a gatehouse and bougainvillea-draped entry to set a majestic tone. Inside, interior designer Edward Lobrano created a breathtaking atmosphere with 22-foot-tall cypress coffered ceilings and custom millwork in the great room. On the main level are the restaurant-quality chef's kitchen, two formal dining rooms, a family sitting room, a playroom, a billiard room, an office, and an extravagant library. This level also includes the laundry facilities, several powder rooms, and a walk-in wine cellar.

Two staircases lead up to a gallery landing with five bedrooms beyond, each with en suite features. The master suite is equipped with a unique outdoor shower, as well as a terrace providing relaxing views of the adjoining water and Nassau Harbor in the distance.

Notable interior high points include impact-resistant mahogany doors, windows for hurricane and tropical storm protection, gleaming wood floors, two fireplaces, cedar closets, and generous use of coquina stone and travertine marble throughout.

The exterior features make the most of the Bahamas' ambiance, with a pool and pavilion, a Jacuzzi spa, day bed nooks, an outdoor powder room, and a complete outdoor kitchen with an adjoining al fresco dining area. Yachters will make good use of the property's 80-foot dock, which can accommodate vessels up to 120 feet in length.

The gatehouse cottage features two bedrooms and two baths and sits atop a 30,000-gallon rainwater tank. A 250 KVA standby generator, a diesel fuel fill line for the dock, an irrigation system with a water-holding tank, CCTV cameras surrounding the property, landscape lighting, and a 2 1/2-car garage complete this very inviting tropical estate. ■

Phil Butler is a publisher, editor, author, and analyst who is a widely cited expert on subjects ranging from digital and social media to travel technology.



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(Above) The property has impressive curb appeal, with a beautifully landscaped entry.

(Top Right) The home's great room features 22-foot-high cypress coffered ceilings, custom millwork, and beautiful wood floors.

(Right) The home's wood-paneled library is warm and inviting, an ideal place to escape into the pages of a favorite book.



ALL PHOTOS COURTESY OF DAMIANOS SOTHEBY'S INTERNATIONAL REALTY

Living Palermo

This Sicilian city is bursting with cross-cultural heritage, old and new

By Tim Johnson



The Monreale Cathedral was built in 1174 by William II of Sicily and remains one of the greatest existing examples of Norman architecture.

FOR MANY YEARS, PALERMO WAS known for one thing—and it wasn't good: being headquarters for the Cosa Nostra. The nadir came in 1992, when two prominent judges were targeted. One of them, named Giovanni Falcone, had made it his mission to get the mafia under control. They responded with 300 kilos of TNT, blowing up his car on the freeway.

Italian military forces took to the streets—some 1,500 of them—won battles, and turned the tide. Over time, Palermo was liberated. Today, it feels like a busy, prosperous place—one with a long, deep, and fascinating history.

Coming in from the port on a guided tour, the only mention of the mafia came when we passed a tall, brown monument, rising some five stories. “This is dedicated to those lost to the mafia,” said the guide, without further explanation. The city acknowledges its connection to organized crime.

Worlds Come Together

But Palermo has so much more to offer than mob stories. It's a city with more than a million people in its metro area, set by the sea. Founded by the Phoenicians in 734 B.C., rule here passed through Carthage, Greece, and Rome, whose reign lasted more than a thousand years. “We feel that we are the navel, more Mediterranean than we are European,” said the guide, as we rolled along one of the city's broad boulevards.

Outside the window, a living city unfolded. Tiny fruit markets, overflowing with fresh produce, colorful flower shops, and the day's catch on display in front of single storefronts, shaded from the autumnal sun by spreading awnings. Today's tour will have two stops.

First up: a tour through the heart of downtown, starting with Porta Nuova. Adorned with four towering Moorish figures, this grand gate celebrates the 1535 victory of Holy Roman Emperor Charles V over the Moors in Tunis, and his trip here to the city afterward where he passed, triumphant, through this very spot.

Leading to the Cassaro, the oldest street in Palermo, the guide took us on a tour of the Palazzo dei Normanni, also known as the Royal Palace, the oldest parts of which were built by the Normans in the 11th century. The guide pointed out an inscription in three languages—Latin, Greek, and Arabic. “In this part of the Mediterranean, we absorb parts of so many civilizations,” she said. “And these three are always mingling.”

The Moors ruled here from 831 to 1072, establishing an emirate and introducing

One of the warmest European cities, Palermo sees over **2,500 annual hours** of sunshine.



ROME

Palermo

Palermo is 263 miles from Rome, roughly 12 hours by train.

Ancient Greeks called Palermo Paleapolis “Old City.”

Palermo is known as a cultural melting pot with exquisite history, culture, and architecture.



CLOCKWISE FROM L: DUCHY/SHUTTERSTOCK; THE EPOCH TIMES; ROMAS; PHOTO/SHUTTERSTOCK



A street in Palermo with fresh produce in front of storefronts shaded by spreading awnings and umbrellas on Sept. 28, 2018.

crops whose ingredients still appear in Sicilian recipes. To this day, Arabic words are a part of the Sicilian language. The Normans besieged the city and took over, making Latin dominant. We spent most of our time in the Palatine Chapel of the palace, passing through its original bronze doors, taking in the mixture of Norman, North African, and Byzantine architectural styles. From above, a mosaic of a young Christ peers down, his two fingers raised to signal a dual nature, both man and God.

Monreale Cathedral

We then rolled up to Monreale, passing through switchbacks to the top, which looks out over the sweeping Golden Valley, rich with agriculture and cradling the city; the vista stretches all the way to the sea. We parked the coach and proceeded on foot up a series of steps.

Huffing and puffing to the top, I reached the cathedral. Inside, it's a wonder. "It was built in

such a monumental way, to impress the pope in Rome," explained the guide, gesturing to all the gold, all around. The man at the Vatican took notice. King William II of Sicily, a Norman, started construction in 1172, and Pope Alexander III issued a bull in 1174 to approve it. Soon after, Pope Lucius III created the archdiocese of Monreale and elevated this abbey to the status of metropolitan cathedral.

The church has an interesting origin story bordering on the mythical. The Norman king claimed that he dozed off under a carob tree during a hunting trip, and the Virgin Mary appeared to him. She showed him that a great treasure in gold coins sat below the tree, and he used that fortune to build the church.

The main thing you notice when you enter: mosaics. They cover some 65,000 square feet, depicting everything from Old and New Testament stories to martyred saints. The cathedral includes both Western Catholic and Eastern Orthodox architecture, Arab craftsmanship, Greek artwork, and work from Venetians and Tuscans, all funded and overseen by former Vikings.

A remarkable place. An abiding example of so many worlds coming together; all the finest results of cultural cross-pollination. The images swirled in my mind, and I scarcely noticed that tall brown monument. To me, Palermo wouldn't be about the mafia—not at all. My memories will always be consumed by the magnificent results that occur when talented people from all over gather together to create such beautiful places. ■

Tim Johnson is based in Toronto. He has visited 140 countries across all seven continents.

If You Go

Fly: Falcone Borsellino Airport serves as a hub for low-cost carriers and nonstop flights from European capitals.

Getting Around: Public transit should be enough to get around the city. If you're thinking of wandering into villages, a rental car is essential.

Stay: Grand Hotel Piazza Borsa is a historic hotel with a courtyard and a rooftop garden.

Take Note: The island isn't serviced by bridges. When it arrives at the tip of the boot, the train is rolled onto the ferry. Tickets: Trenitalia.com.



Palermo is the capital of Sicily, the largest Mediterranean island located just off the tip of Italy's "boot."

The Bittersweet End:

6 Alluring Amari to Finish a Big Meal the Italian Way

By Kevin Revolinski

ITALIANS KNOW HOW TO EAT LONG, wonderful, late-night dinners that leave one happy—but sometimes uncomfortably full. Fortunately, they also know a cure: amaro (plural is “amari”), meaning “bitter.” These digestives bring together regional herbal ingredients with varying degrees of bitterness and a sweetening counterbalance. While the most popular brands include *Amaro Montenegro*, *Amaro Averna*, and *Amaro Nonino*, here are several alternative standouts.



Cocchi Dopo Teatro Vermouth Amaro

Cocchi is a classic vermouth from Torino, perfect in a Manhattan cocktail. This amaro takes that vermouth base and adds a light bitterness with, among other things, gentian and chiretta flowers. The name, “after theater,” recommends it for a late-night sip; it's refreshing over ice or mixed with bold whiskeys.



Amaro Sfumato Rabarbaro

You could be forgiven for thinking “sfumato” indicates smoke—“fumo” in Italian—and indeed, a distinct smokiness sets this apart. But instead, it means “nuanced,” and refers to an art style marked by subtle transitions between light and dark colors. The central ingredient is Chinese rhubarb; the bitterness of alpine herbs is perfectly balanced with the sweetness of berries; and the smokiness is not overdone.



Amaro Alta Verde

Unlike the darker amber and brown colors of the other amari, this one comes through light and green. The central ingredient is a variety of wormwood (similar to that which gives absinthe its green color), and its formula brings a bold bitterness tempered by a bit of citrus.



Cardamaro Vino Amaro

Herbalist Rachele Torlasco Bosca came up with this vino amaro—an amaro made with a wine base—in the 1950s. Today, an 8th-generation winemaker in Canelli d'Asti oversees its production. Blessed thistle and artichoke thistle (cardo), as well as 23 other botanicals, are infused into a local wine. This pairs well with charcuterie and bold cheeses, and, like Dopo Teatro, substitutes well for vermouth.



Elisir Novasalus

A product of Antica Erboristeria Cappelletti, this vino amaro is more aggressive with its bitterness. Based on a dry Marsala and a unique Sicilian tree sap, the six-month production process blends in plants native to the high Alps. Some may prefer this blended with sweeter drinks or chased with a sparkling wine. The wine gives way to a long, bitter finish.



Pasubio Vino Amaro

Produced amid the Dolomite Mountains in northern Italy, this vino amaro brings the flavors of mountain blueberries and a hint of smoke. The wine base makes it seem almost vermouth-like at first sip, but it settles into the herbs and resinous mugo pine cones in the finish. Serve slightly chilled.

Kevin Revolinski is an avid traveler, craft beer enthusiast, and home-cooking fan. He's based in Madison, Wis.

THIS PAGE CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: KIEV/VICTOR/SHUTTERSTOCK, SHUTTERSTOCK, WIESBIE/SHUTTERSTOCK

COURTESY OF HAUS ALPENZ

Certified pre-owned vehicles represent an affordable, practical way to own a luxury car.



Luxury — FOR LESS —

BY CONSIDERING A CERTIFIED PRE-OWNED VEHICLE,
YOU CAN GET A LATE-MODEL LEXUS AT A NEW TOYOTA PRICE

◆ By Bill Lindsey

PULL UP IN THE OFFICE parking garage or restaurant parking lot in a shiny, recent-vintage Porsche sports car, Mercedes sedan, or Cadillac Escalade SUV, and there's a chance many observers may snort a bit judgmentally, assuming you have more money than sense.

But when you discover the CPO secret, you actually may be able to drive a luxury vehicle that costs less than the mid-priced cars that your friends, co-workers, and family members drive. Imagine driving a three-year-old, looks-like-new Porsche Macan SUV that cost \$10,000 less than what your neighbor paid for a new Hyundai grocery-getter. They will wonder why you have a bemused, Mona Lisa-like smile every time you see their car.

CPO Standards

CPO stands for certified pre-owned. Many people are quick to dismiss even considering a "used car," saying they don't want to drive someone else's worn-out vehicle, but there's a large distinction between used and CPO.

The "C" for certified means that the vehicle has been thoroughly examined, with any noted repairs performed and parts such as tires and brakes replaced if needed. In addition, CPO vehicles are only sold by dealerships that also sell and service the same brand of new vehicles, and these dealerships are required to comply with stringent manufacturer-imposed rules in order

A CPO vehicle may be more trouble-free than it was when it first rolled off the lot.

to be allowed to sell them.

Only the best pre-owned or off-lease vehicles qualify to be sold as CPO. In most cases, they are two-to-three years old, have less than 36,000 miles on the odometer, and haven't been involved in crashes or experienced other serious damage such as floods.

The CPO vehicles must also undergo a rigorous inspection of between 100 and 300 items and systems, ranging from simple tire tread measurements to complex engine, transmission, and electronic system evaluations, plus sound system checks and evaluations for horn, seatbelt, and mirror operation. If a vehicle doesn't pass all the tests, it must be sold as-is, with no warranty.

Trouble-Free Benefits

The most appealing aspect of purchasing a CPO vehicle is the price, which can be at least 30 percent less than the cost of a brand-new, similarly equipped vehicle, and it's often accompanied by very favorable loan terms.

Another large charm is knowing that an experienced technician armed with cutting-edge electronic diagnostic equipment

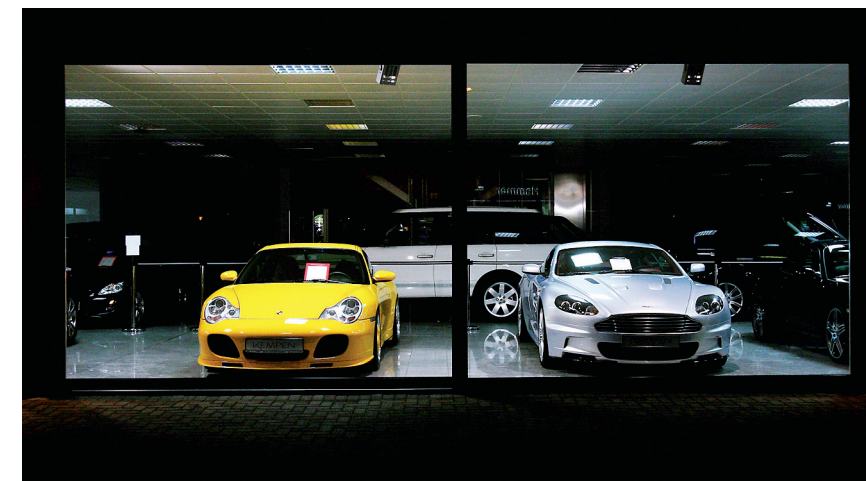
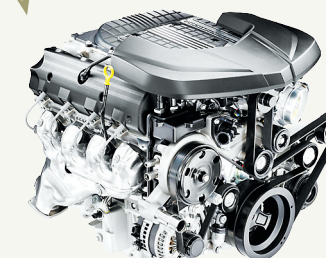
A certified pre-owned vehicle will have obvious items such as tires in good condition, as well as other things not as easy to see or assess.



To qualify as a CPO vehicle, it must pass a rigorous inspection of up to 300 mechanical and electrical components.



CPO vehicle engines and related systems are protected by warranties honored at all manufacturer's service departments nationwide.



CPO vehicles are an ideal way to drive a cared-for luxury car at a new mid-priced car price.

LEFT PAGE: EVERETT COLLECTION/SHUTTERSTOCK; THIS PAGE FROM TOP: EVANNOSTRO/SHUTTERSTOCK, IURI/SHUTTERSTOCK, VLADIMIR RYS/GETTY IMAGES, TROYBOWROD/SHUTTERSTOCK



A CPO car can give you access to high-end features not always available on similarly priced new mid-level vehicles.

has evaluated virtually every inch and part of the vehicle. There's no better way to avoid a "lemon" than to let someone else drive a vehicle in real-life conditions for a few thousand miles. Quite often, if serious or even minor problems are present, they will make themselves known in the first few months of use. By identifying and correcting any issues, a CPO vehicle may be more trouble-free than it was when it first rolled off the lot.

For more peace of mind, most CPO vehicles are backed by a comprehensive paint-to-tires, bumper-to-bumper warranty with similar coverage to that offered for new vehicles. In cases in which the original factory warranty period is still in effect, some CPO vehicles are sold with a one-year extension of that coverage. In that way alone, choosing a CPO vehicle over a private seller's similarly equipped vehicle with the same price, mileage, model, and age could well be the better decision.

Many savvy consumers enjoy the ability to own a late-model car or SUV while avoiding the depreciation that affects most vehicles the moment they drive off the dealership lot. Unlike a used-car dealer that may offer to make any needed post-sale repairs only at their facility, CPO warranties are recognized by all dealers of the vehicle manufacturer, meaning that

an owner who buys a CPO vehicle in Utah can have it repaired under warranty in Ohio, Florida, or any other same-brand franchised dealerships in the United States.

While it's possible that a consumer could find a very similar vehicle offered for sale by an individual or auto retailer at a lower price than that charged for a CPO model, the lower price comes with more ownership risks to the purchaser.

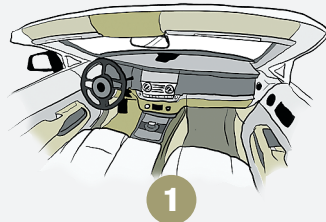
In all cases, a very careful road test and physical inspection of the vehicle and as many of its components that can be practically accessed—such as tires, wiper blades, and interior, plus a thorough review of any warranty and related expirations, exceptions, deductibles, and roadside assistance coverage—are strongly recommended prior to finalizing the deal.

The appeal of purchasing a vehicle that's very similar to a new model for a significantly lower price is another big plus of the CPO program. Auto manufacturers tend to produce cars that look very much alike for several years before instituting major design changes, allowing the buyer of a CPO vehicle to drive a car or SUV that many would assume is brand-new.

For these reasons, many knowledgeable consumers are able to enjoy a luxury car at an attainable price. ■

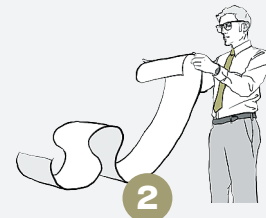
E
LIFESTYLE
**LUXURY AT
COMPACT PRICES**

*The Secrets of
CPO Vehicles*



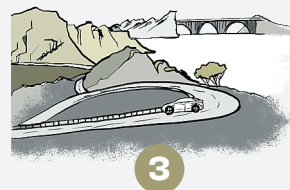
Like New, But Better

Many CPO vehicles are only a few years old, have very low mileage, are in "like new" condition, and are priced much lower than when they were new, allowing you to get more for your money.



Read the Fine Print

Carefully review the warranty to determine what is covered and for how long. Some CPO warranties rival factory coverage.



The Ultimate Test Drive

Some manufacturers, such as Mercedes, provide a seven-day, 500-mile "test drive." If during this period you are dissatisfied, you can bring it back to exchange for another CPO vehicle.

SOPHISTICATED
**MULTITASKING
TIMEPIECES**

These wristwatches are perfect for those who revel in the details

By Bill Lindsey



Another Way to Look at Time
MEISTERSINGER VINTAGO
\$2,049

This timepiece is a great choice for those who seek an unusual way to keep track of time and appreciate a vintage appearance. Rather than the traditional arrangement of a separate hour and minute hand, there is just one elongated black hand to clearly indicate the time as it sweeps around a dial that resembles old parchment. A vertical window at the 3 o'clock position utilizes a small dot to display the day of the month.



Cleared for Takeoff
**HAMILTON KHAKE PILOT
AUTO CHRONO**
\$1,845

Established in 1892 to make watches used to synchronize U.S. train services, in 1918, Hamilton was tasked with providing timepieces to keep the brand-new U.S. Air Mail service on time. The firm's latest chronograph has features found on high-end models costing 10 times as much, such as a precision mechanical movement with a 60-hour power reserve residing within a handsome 42 mm stainless-steel case, while monitoring elapsed hours, minutes, and seconds. This is an impressive traditional chronometer at a very reasonable price.



Time Traveler
**TISSOT HERITAGE
NAVIGATOR AUTOMATIC
160TH ANNIVERSARY COSC**
\$1,975

This interesting and very practical model celebrates Tissot's 160 years of crafting sophisticated watches. It combines the ability to track multiple time zones with elegant styling that is equally at home in an office environment or a backyard barbecue. With the dial set to a specific time zone, other zones can be easily monitored as well, making this Official Swiss Chronometer Testing Institute-certified chronometer a handy tool for those who frequently make calls to various time zones.



Over the Moon
**LONGINES MASTER
COLLECTION L2.909.4.78.6**
\$2,525

Founded in Saint-Imier, Switzerland, in 1832, Longines has since established a well-deserved reputation for quality and innovation, as seen in this elegant complication. A moon phase display is located at the 6 o'clock position, tracking the orb's movement across the sky, while an outer dial displays the date. The silver "barleycorn" style dial provides an excellent accent to the blue-steel hour, minute, and second hands, as well as to the stainless-steel 40 mm case that protects the mechanical movement.



Smart Looks
**FREDERIQUE CONSTANT
SMARTWATCH GENTS
CLASSICS FC-285V5B4**
\$1,501

This sleek timepiece is an ideal choice for business or formal wear, with features that are as appealing as its classic design. The 42 mm rose gold-plated, water-resistant case houses a movement that, in addition to the current time on the primary dial, displays the date and counts down 100 seconds at a time on the subdial inset at the 6 o'clock position. Run time is approximately 25 months between battery replacements.

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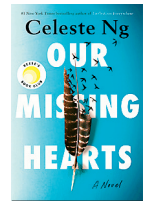
COURTESY OF LONGINES, HAMILTON, TISSOT, MEISTERSINGER, FREDERIQUE CONSTANT

Are there books you'd recommend?
We'd love to hear from you. Let us know at features@epochtimes.com

RECOMMENDED READING

This week, we feature a 1930s children's classic that inspires optimism, and an insightful analysis of how modern globalization has come to its end.

FICTION

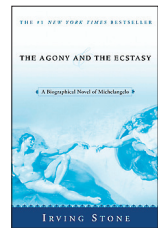


'OUR MISSING HEARTS'
By Celeste Ng

A Mother's Loving Message

Bird Gardner is 9 years old when his Chinese American mother leaves. His mother is a poet, and her words resonate in a world where patriotism has turned to paranoia. When he's 12, he leaves his quiet existence and goes in search for her, finding clues in the library.

PENGUIN PRESS, 2022
352 PAGES



'THE AGONY AND THE ECSTASY'
By Irving Stone

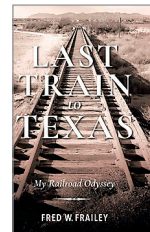
A Portrait of Michelangelo

This thick novel was the most popular, and likely the most enduring, of Irving Stone's biographical novels. To prepare, he worked in an Italian marble quarry, read the great artist's letters, and studied his studio tech-

niques. The result? A marvelous depiction of the man who sculpted the Pietà and the David and painted the Sistine Chapel ceiling. Stone also vividly recreates the tempestuous and often violent days of the Renaissance during the Medici family's reign. A great read for long winter nights.

BERKLEY REPRINT EDITION,
2004, 784 PAGES

TRANSPORTATION



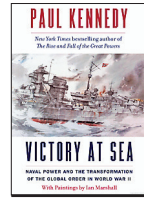
'LAST TRAIN TO TEXAS'
By Fred W. Frailey

A Fascination With Railroads

Frailey was obsessed with railroads as a child and maintained that interest thereafter. He turned his obsession into a career without once working for a railroad. This book collects his magazine essays—some thoughtful, some humorous—starting in the late 1960s, when the railroads were in collapse, through its transformation and into the 21st century. This book traces modern railroading, warts and all, via a fascinating set of stories.

INDIANA UNIVERSITY PRESS,
2020, 232 PAGES

HISTORY



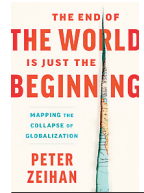
'VICTORY AT SEA'
By Paul Kennedy

World War II at Sea

Renowned marine artist Ian Marshall planned a new collection of his paintings, and historian Paul Kennedy agreed to write the book's text. Then, Marshall died. Since the paintings were completed, Kennedy finished the book as a tribute to his friend. The result is magnificent. Kennedy's fine exploration of the sea power that influenced the Allied victory complements Marshall's paintings to offer a breathtaking view of World War II at sea.

YALE UNIVERSITY PRESS,
2022, 544 PAGES

CURRENT AFFAIRS



'THE END OF THE WORLD IS JUST THE BEGINNING'
By Peter Zeihan

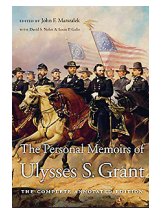
Mapping the End of Globalization

A leading geopolitical strategist presents a convincing case that the

modern world is about to start moving backward. Zeihan identifies numerous global problems, including dwindling populations and hyper-finance. Global trade will be impacted, leaving some countries self-sufficient and others searching for answers.

HARPER BUSINESS, 2022
512 PAGES

CLASSICS



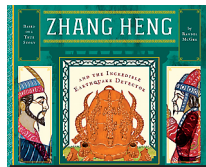
'PERSONAL MEMOIRS OF ULYSSES S. GRANT'
By Ulysses S. Grant

A Remarkable American's Story

Dying just a week after finishing his memoirs and writing in haste out of concern for his wife's financial welfare, President Grant hoped his reminiscences would "meet the approval of the reader." His autobiography more than met that hope, becoming a best-seller then and still being regarded as a classic of American history and literature to this day. He covers his early life through the Civil War, giving accounts of battles and tactics, but also giving a remarkable picture of 19th-century military life. A complete and annotated edition.

BELKNAP PRESS, 2017,
816 PAGES

FOR KIDS

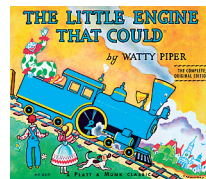


'ZHANG HENG AND THE INCREDIBLE EARTHQUAKE DETECTOR'
By Randel McGee

An Ancient Chinese Inventor

Storyteller, artist, and puppeteer Randel McGee gives us Zhang Heng, the Chinese inventor who long ago devised the first machine to detect earthquakes. Inspired by shadow puppets, the unusual artwork adds to the charm of this tale.

FAMILIUS, 2021, 32 PAGES



'THE LITTLE ENGINE THAT COULD'
By Watty Piper

Perseverance and Self-Confidence

You probably know this tale of the little engine struggling to get up over the mountain. A must for every child's bookshelf, this story illustrates important traits of perseverance, fortitude, self-confidence, and tenacity.

GROSSET & DUNLAP REPRINT,
2001, 48 PAGES

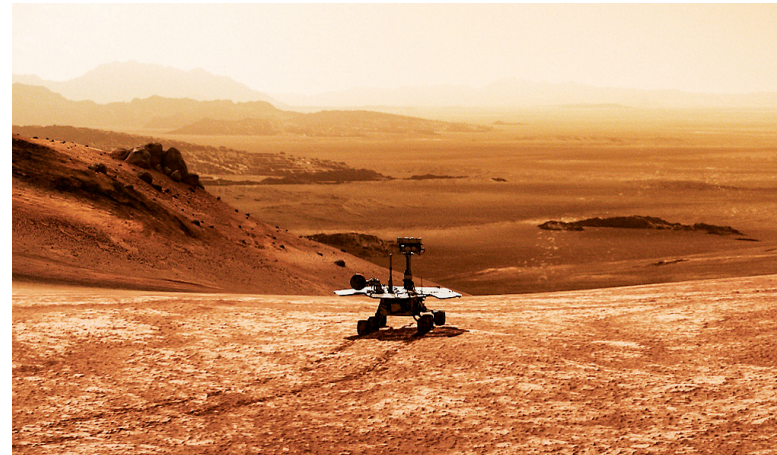


Ian Kane
is a U.S. Army veteran, filmmaker, and author.
He enjoys the great outdoors and volunteering.

MOVIE REVIEWS

This week, we feature an animated fantasy sure to please dragon fans and a Western adventure with John Wayne in his first starring role.

NEW RELEASE



'Good Night Oppy' (2022)

This feel-good documentary chronicles the 2002 project to complete two robots—"Opportunity" and "Spirit"—that will journey to Mars to determine if there was ever water on the now-dust bowl planet. While the engineering process incurs its share of Murphy's Law, the launch and mission does succeed.

Relying heavily on CGI for the bulk of the Mars segments, the near thriller, while impressive, feels synthetic. For a movie so deeply steeped and rooted in science and adventure, the new Amazon film is a bit in short supply of both.

DOCUMENTARY | HISTORY | SCIENCE | TECHNOLOGY

Release Date:
Nov. 23, 2022

Director:
Ryan White

Running Time:
1 hour, 45 minutes

MPAA Rating: PG

Where to Watch:
Theaters

★★★★☆

A CINEMATIC FIRST



'The Big Trail' (1930)

Young trapper Breck Coleman (John Wayne, in his first starring role) is hired by a group of settlers to scout ahead for

them while they make their way along the Oregon Trail, facing many dangers together.

Shot on location across the West, this tale of dust and grit captures the essence

of early 19th-century pioneer life and what they had to endure on the journey.

ADVENTURE | ROMANCE | WESTERN

Release Date:
Nov. 1, 1930

Directors:
Raoul Walsh,
Louis R. Loeffler (uncredited)

Starring:
John Wayne,
Marguerite Churchill,
El Brendel

Running Time:
2 hours, 5 minutes

Not Rated

Where to Watch:
DirecTV, Apple TV, Vudu

★★★★★

FAMILY PICK

'How to Train Your Dragon' (2010)

Long ago, a Viking teen named Hiccup (Jay Baruchel) signs up for his village's dragon-fighting school to prove himself to his father, Stoick (Gerard Butler), chief of his clan. But when Hiccup befriends a young, rare dragon, he tries to convince everyone that dragons, which often raid their village, can be peaceful.

This animated tale sports some great visuals and has some positive messages about overcoming stereotypes and getting along with others. However, it



contains some mature themes and is more suitable for older children.

ANIMATION | ACTION | ADVENTURE

Release Date:
March 26, 2010

Directors:
Dean DeBlois,
Chris Sanders

Starring:
Jay Baruchel (voice),
Gerard Butler (voice),
Christopher Mintz-Plasse (voice)

Running Time:
1 hour, 38 minutes

MPAA Rating:
PG

Where to Watch:
Vudu, DirecTV, Redbox

★★★★☆

AN ENTERTAINING ESPIONAGE THRILLER

'American Assassin' (2017)

Mitch Rapp (Dylan O'Brien) is on vacation with his fiancée when a group of terrorists suddenly attack a beach and kill her. Vowing revenge, Rapp eventually links up with former U.S. Navy SEAL Stan Hurley (Michael Keaton), who leads a black operations unit and trains Rapp in the art of warfare.

This tale of revenge isn't exactly original, but this flick is a pretty fun espionage thriller with some fantastic action sequences and



exotic locales. Just be aware that it does contain brutal fight scenes.

ACTION | THRILLER

Release Date:
Sept. 15, 2017

Director:
Michael Cuesta

Starring:
Dylan O'Brien, Michael Keaton, Sanaa Lathan

Run Time:
1 hour, 51 minutes

MPAA Rating: R

Where to Watch:
DirecTV, Vudu, Hulu

★★★★☆



Office Holiday Party Tips

You have to attend, so here are a few suggestions to make sure you enjoy it

It's that time of year when coworkers are expected to spend some "off time" together, so instead of dreading it, make it an opportunity to get to know your associates better, without the stress of due dates or sales quotas.

By Bill Lindsey

1 Take It for What It Is

An office or work party is a must-attend for several reasons; you get to mingle with coworkers you might not often see otherwise, and you just might make some new friends, or at least solidify good relationships. Because it is a work event, your presence is expected just as it would be for a mandatory workplace meeting. Arrive on time and don't sneak out early. Don't bring the kids, and unless the invitation allows a plus one, don't bring one of those, either.



2 Behave Graciously

Be aware that you are being watched and judged by coworkers and by the boss. What you do and say will be remembered, so make sure it's all good. Make any guests feel welcome by chatting with them. Seek out the bosses to thank them for hosting the event, but under no circumstances should you steer the conversation to work topics. If you feel the urge to hop onto a table and belt out "Tomorrow," lock yourself in a closet until it passes.

3 Moderation Matters

Overindulging is never a good idea, especially when it involves spiked eggnog or any other adult beverage at a work party. If the boss is urging everyone to drain their glasses, make sure yours is filled with soda water or ginger ale. This advice also applies to the buffet. Don't pile food onto your plate like you haven't eaten in three days, and don't go back for seconds until everyone else has been through the first time.

4 Make Small Talk

You know to avoid work-related topics, so what can you discuss? Politics and religion are off the list, but it's OK to comment—nicely—on a coworker's outfit (not everyone realizes the goal isn't being memorable for what you wear to the party). Being a good listener will win more points than if you monopolize the conversation, so leave your ego at the coat check and let others talk about themselves. Hobbies, children, and pets are good conversation starters with shy coworkers.

5 Dress Up!

When choosing what to wear, go up one notch in "dressiness," but resist the urge to arrive in clubwear, even if you look amazing in it. Flair is good, but too much skin is bad. If no dress code is provided, guys can wear a sports coat and tie, and ladies a dress, using the 8 1/2 by 11 test to make sure it's not overly short (while sitting, place a piece of copy paper on your lap; if it covers more skin than the dress does, ditch that dress).

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Courageous Reporting

We believe that investigating and exposing the truth is the only way that we can remain safe and free

CROSSFIRE HURRICANE

ON MAY 25, 2017, The Epoch Times published an article headlined "Despite Allegations, No Evidence of Trump–Russia Collusion Found." The article detailed that—despite a media frenzy at the time—no actual evidence had been uncovered that President Donald Trump or anyone associated with his campaign had colluded with Russia to influence the 2016 presidential election.

OUR REPORTING was proven accurate with the conclusion of the investigation by special counsel Robert Mueller.

NOT ONLY DID WE NOT BUY INTO the false narrative that Trump colluded with Russia, but we have also been a leader in reporting on the irregular and apparently politicized nature of the FBI's investigation of the Trump campaign. During the past five years, we have published dozens of articles on the topic, many of them exclusive.



ELECTION INTEGRITY

FOLLOWING THE 2020 ELECTION, The Epoch Times was at the forefront of investigating and reporting on the questions surrounding the integrity of the election. Through our fact-based and independent reporting, we were able to uncover multiple irregularities.



ORIGINS OF COVID-19

ON APRIL 15, 2020, The Epoch Times published its documentary "Tracking Down the Origin of Wuhan Coronavirus." The film, which received over 100 million views, explored the origins of the virus, including the possibility of a lab leak. It presents scientific data and interviews with top scientists and national security experts.

YEARS AFTER THE RELEASE of this groundbreaking documentary, the possibility of a lab leak is considered by government officials and experts as the most likely explanation for the virus's spread.



CHINA THREAT

SINCE ITS INCEPTION in the year 2000, The Epoch Times has been at the forefront of reporting on the infiltration of the United States by the Chinese Communist Party. Numerous times over the years, we've broken major China-related stories ahead of other news organizations. In 2003, The Epoch Times was the first media outlet to systematically and continuously report on the spread of SARS, well ahead of most other Western media. We were also the first to report on state-sponsored forced organ harvesting in China—one of the most underreported atrocities of our time—in

which prisoners of conscience are killed for their organs, which are then sold for profit on a large scale.

THE EPOCH TIMES also published the editorial series "Nine Commentaries on the Communist Party," revealing the true nature and history of the Communist Party and inspiring a movement that so far has seen more than 400 million Chinese people quit the Party and its affiliated organizations. Another of our series, "How the Specter of Communism Is Ruling Our World," systematically exposes the evil nature of communism, as well as the harm it has brought and continues to inflict on the United States and the world.



A message and a story you do not want to miss

Dear future subscriber,
If you are sick of the bias, lies, and fake outrage that's business-as-usual in the media today, I believe that you will love our weekly magazine, Epoch Insight.

My name is Kirk Wang, and I am the senior vice president of the Subscription Department at The Epoch Times—the fastest-growing independent news outlet in America.

When The Epoch Times was founded in 2000, I was the first to join the production team in Atlanta. Together, we made our first edition, in Chinese. Thus began our commitment to reporting the truth and exposing the Chinese Communist Party and its infiltration in the United States and around the world.

In today's desert of shameless media dishonesty, The Epoch Times has become an oasis for those thirsting for truthful, fact-based coverage of current events. Now, our news magazine Epoch Insight provides an even more refreshing shelter for you to explore.

Produced by our award-winning newsroom, Epoch Insight is a weekly publication that provides big-picture news coverage and in-depth analysis of today's most challenging issues.

Epoch Insight will keep you up to date on the most significant developments in the United States, world, as well as economic news, with exclusive content in the timeless format of a real American news magazine.

You can trust us to provide you with this in-depth coverage because we're committed to honoring Truth and Tradition—and treating our readers with the respect they deserve.

Let me offer you three reasons why honest reporting is absolutely central to every line you read in The Epoch Times and Epoch Insight. Later on, you can assess the truth of my claims for yourself.



Kirk Wang, SVP of Subscription

1. The Epoch Times rejects politically motivated journalism.

Our commitment to tradition is so strong that we believe YOU ought to be able to judge facts for yourself and decide what to make of them.

Many other media corporations want to tightly control what you're allowed to see or read, so that you don't arrive at the "wrong" views.

Not us. When we search for new hires, every single job description emphasizes that the candidate must practice ethical journalism: "Seek the truth and report it." This used to be standard in American newsrooms ... but lately it's been sacrificed by activists who emphasize ideology over facts.

Is it hard to find reporters who qualify? You bet. A lot of journalism schools have taught students to forsake traditional journalistic ethics for newsroom activism.

While this hiring process is laborious, it has proven successful: The Epoch Times has built a team of reporters who are dedicated to seeking and reporting the truth, regardless of whether what they find conflicts with their personal biases.

The Epoch Times takes this principle so seriously that it has never endorsed a political candidate for office. Can you imagine?

2. The Epoch Times is indebted to no one.

Let's face it: If you are beholden to a corporation or conglomerate, you aren't really free to report the facts. That's the problem we see with many news outlets today—they know where their bread is buttered, and their "factual" reporting shows it!

What's more, if your business model depends on getting a ton of "clicks," you aren't really free to report the news honestly. Every single headline is an advertisement looking to manipulate the consumer. (Remember the saying, "If a product is 'free,' there's a good chance that YOU are the product.")

But The Epoch Times is totally independent. We are funded by loyal subscribers like you and generous donors who are proud to support high-quality, trustworthy journalism.

(By becoming a subscriber today, YOU will become part of this movement to restore truth to our country.)

3. The Epoch Times has seen firsthand where ideological manipulation leads.

I have to warn you, this part of the letter gets a little heavy, and I write it with a somber heart.

You see, the founders of The Epoch Times are Chinese Americans who witnessed persecution in communist China.

We started a newspaper that would counteract the total censorship of the press inside China and the world's reporting about China, and let people see the truth, not just the official government narrative.

And for their courageous commitment to the

truth, many Epoch Times journalists paid a very heavy price.

In 2000, China's state security agents arrested the manager of the newspaper's China bureau and 10 journalists. Editor-in-chief Zhang Yuhui received a prison sentence of 10 years, while Epoch Times staff member Huang Kui received five.

Both men were interrogated, tortured, forced into slave labor, and subjected to brainwashing classes. Huang was released in 2004 and Zhang in 2010. However, several other Epoch Times staff members were never heard from again. We fear they paid the ultimate price for their commitment to telling the truth.

So, for us, it's personal. When you have colleagues tortured and killed for honest reporting, you're not going to forsake those principles just because it's convenient. We would dishonor their sacrifice if we gave you anything less than the honest truth.

I'd like to invite you to take a look at this Epoch Insight magazine and decide for yourself if it's the kind of in-depth news you've been looking for.

So please, right now, act on our special offer: only \$1 for your first four issues of Epoch Insight. Just go to [ReadEpochInsight.com](https://www.readepoch.com). You'll also enjoy a savings of 45 percent off our regular rate on the next 12 months of superior journalism ... plus other big extras, including complete access to the exceptional content on The Epoch Times' acclaimed website, [TheEpochTimes.com](https://www.theepochtimes.com)

In Truth and Tradition,



Kirk Wang
SVP of Subscription
The Epoch Times

What Our Readers Say

“It’s a magazine that’s FOR the American people, not against.”

Vanessa Morrison, medical records clerk

“Well thought out material, thoroughly investigated, and I trust [the] sources.”

Gail F. Sauve, homemaker

“It is straightforward, rather than a lot of speculation or pontificating.”

Jan Hamilton, retired professional

“[Insight] reminds me that there are still a LOT of wonderful, good, and dedicated people in this country.”

Creed Haymond, surgeon

“Unbiased reporting. Short, impactful articles.”

Mark Naumann, photographer

“I can trust what I read and make up my own mind how I feel about the subject.”

Jim Edwards, retired

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